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A MODERN HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

A MODERN HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

By

R. H. GRETTON

VOLUME I 1880-1898

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PREFACE

THE changes which took place in English life between the years 1880 and 1910 were changes affecting every activity of the nation, corporate and individual. They concerned political ideas, social habits and commercial methods, religious outlook and material equipment, education and the housekeeper's supplies, keeping of holidays and furnishing of houses, philosophical speculation and the pursuits of a clerk's Saturday afternoons. After long incubation, the changes came about so swiftly that their magnitude was not recognised. Yet these thirty years made more difference to England than did the mechanical inventions of the early Victorian period. The locomotive, the telegraph, the innumerable developments of manufacturing machinery had worked obvious transformations; and those who saw them had thought that they saw a changed England. Yet not until a generation arose in whose lives these things were customary, did an England inherently changed come into being. A Rip Van Winkle of 1810, waking, say, in 1850, would have been completely bewildered by the steam-engine; but he might have passed the remainder of his life in conversation which he would have enjoyed and found reasonably familiar. A Rip Van Winkle of 1870, waking in 1910, while he would have grasped the principle of the motor car in twenty minutes, would never have been on conversational terms with his neighbours; he would constantly have found he did not

know what they were talking about. For in this last period the subtlest transformation of all had taken place—the changes had become part of the men themselves. Club windows were no longer full of old gentlemen who woke from snoring to deplore the spirit of the age; the old gentlemen were all playing golf, and doing their best to understand their sons' slang.

A few instances will suffice to bring out the contrast between the conditions of 1880 and those of 1910. The England of 1880, deep-set in a kind of habit of fighting in far corners of the globe, held herself aloof from European politics; it could almost be made an election cry against Lord Beaconsfield that he was likely to entangle us in European disputes. The country had its nerves all in its extremities. The England of 1910, a vital participant in every European question, summoned from great self-governing, almost independent, dominions a conclave of premiers to be taken into the counsels of her Foreign Secretary. The sensitiveness had shifted back to the heart.

In the Parliament of 1880 a Hertfordshire borough, in which the total poll was about 700, provided for Mr Balfour a seat the moral validity of which was unquestioned. In the Parliament of 1910 he sat as one of the Members for the City of London; and his constituency of 20,000, being composed in the main of plural voters, was regarded by more than half the House of Commons as little better than a rotten borough.

In 1880 the capital expenditure of even the greatest municipal authorities of the country was limited to such sums as they could obtain either from the Public Works Loan Commissioners or from private lenders, such as banks and insurance companies. The Funded Municipal

Loan, subscribed by the public, had not begun to exist. In 1910 the total of municipal stock approached £600,000,000.

London society of 1880 was so circumscribed that the lists of the Court presentations filled only two columns of *The Times*. South African millionaires were not known as yet; gold in the Transvaal was but just being discovered, and Kimberley diamonds were in social estimation poor things beside the Brazilian and Golconda heirlooms of the old families.

Naturally contrasts in manners do not admit of such succinct presentation; but what would an old member of the Cavalry Club in 1880 have said if he could have foreseen that in 1909 a serious point of rivalry between the Cavalry Club and the Guards' Club was to be the quality of their respective recipes for barley-water?

Music halls, finding their feet after the slow decay of the remnants of "Corinthian" London, were in 1880 appealing to people of the middle class. But the vast tide of humanity that flowed in and out of them in 1910 differed as much from the music-hall crowd of 1880 as that had differed from the boon companions at Mott's in 1865. The two latter, far apart in class, were near enough in a general inclination to dissipation and raffishness. The Coliseum crowds of 1910, without a vice to divide among them, represented thousands upon thousands of petty suburban families, whose younger members were as free to spend as to earn their sixpences, to stay out late, and to turn, if so minded, into a hundred bars where no one would be drunk.

Cheap money, cheap transport, cheap literature worked so overwhelmingly after 1880 as to produce on all sides

a diminution of class consciousness. Society, though a section of it might remain truly aristocratic, and in the counties might be "the county" still, became in London so wide that its fringes were no longer distinguishable. The social fabric was splitting into the two divisions of capital and labour. After 1880 industrial and trading stocks became a normal field of investment for the surplus money of persons not engaged in commerce or manufacture. This change, uniting the interests of the aristocratic and professional classes with those of the manufacturer, gives the fundamental aspect of that alteration of class feeling which brought the South African millionaire into Park Lane. Even the "social revolution," so burning a gospel in 1880, did not escape the general obliterating of landmarks. Militant republicanism, which could make headway while the House of Commons consisted only of the landowner and the manufacturer, lost ground. The true strength of Fabianism lay in the fact that the great pooling of industrial capital, which began in the eighties, exposed it to all sorts of flank attacks by taxation. Capital was no longer a stronghold to be besieged; it was a commonwealth to be administered; and socialism, instead of opening sluice-gates of revolution, ran its force into a hundred administrative channels. Labour entered Parliament and town councils; and socialism became, in legislative matters, a distinction of degree rather than of kind.

In politics the year 1880 was a real turning-point. Weariness of the dragging wars of thirty years and growing disgust at neglect of the problems at home, induced the hope that a fresh Government would break away from traditional political manœuvring. At the same time the

presence of Mr Chamberlain in the new Government seemed to promise, not only attention to domestic affairs, but attention of a newly democratic kind—a fitting sequel to the franchise reform of 1867. On the Conservative side a spirit was stirring which expressed itself in the Fourth Party's critical detachment from its leaders. The Irish, having placed Parnell at their head instead of Butt, came back to Westminster for the first time Nationalist in the sense in which recent generations understand that term. Lastly Labour, which, in the ascendancy of middle-class politics following on the Reform Bill of 1832, had deliberately abandoned political channels, began with the eighties to return its force into those channels. Economic developments cannot be so precisely dated. Yet the first experiments with the telephone in London, the first public use of electric light, the beginning of the importation of meat in mechanically chilled chambers, the establishment of postal orders, the first instance of a funded municipal debt, all belong to the year 1880.

Consideration of social and economic changes has not formed an essential part of the scheme of previous historians of our times. Mr Justin McCarthy, adding three volumes to his notable work, brought it down from 1880 to 1901; and the last volume of Dr J. F. Bright's admirable history treats also of these years. Mr Herbert Paul closes with the fall of the Liberal Government in 1895. Each of these writers was, in regard to the period covered by the present work, dealing with the final stage of a long survey. My endeavour has been to string these years on a new thread; and to this end the prolongation of the survey to a later date is more than the addition of

a certain number of years. It is a means of grasping the whole. The death of Queen Victoria closed an epoch, but the new epoch was to throw light upon that which preceded it. A strong political revival was to make plain what forces had been at work beneath the apparent lassitude, almost impotence, of parliamentary institutions in the last twenty years of Queen Victoria's reign; and in society an equally astonishing self-assertion was to give the measure of the advance in wealth, in knowledge (if not in education), in capacity for living, which had been accumulating behind bounds. The long reign of Queen Victoria did indeed somewhat chill English life towards its end. In political affairs it was distinctly too long for the well-being of Government. To the inevitable difficulty of serving a sovereign fixed by mere weight of years in a certain inaccessibility to new opinions, was added the difficulty that the sovereign was a woman. Society, the intellectual world, the arts, ethical movements, were under a crust of habit which, where it did not produce complete inertia, distorted the ideas that broke through it. In family life, in religious thought, in the pursuits of the people, change during the eighties and nineties was almost always combative; it became simpler and more straightforward under King Edward. The militant agnosticism which was so rife in the periodical publications of the eighties, the heated discussion of the "emancipation" of women from a purely domestic existence—to take only two instances—lost in the later period most of their violence and something of their terror.

The thirty years of my history fall, then, into two divisions. The first presents us the spectacle of governments enmeshed in older political habits, bewildered by new de-

mands, besieged by new methods and pursued to the end by entanglements; until the fall of Omdurman and the Peace of Vereeniging English politicians were a House of Atreus. But it presents us also a people busy at accumulation, increasing its power, and its capacity for the absorption of material supplies and of ideas. The second division gives us, in both the political and the social world, an explosion of energy, an expression of stored force, a revelation of movement.

It will be clear from the references given in the text that I have relied for my dates and facts mainly upon the files of *The Times*. As for the popular interests of the moment, they are always mirrored in the current numbers of *Punch*, and to the files of that periodical I am deeply indebted. I have, of course, drawn upon the notable biographies of the period. Lastly, I am under a more personal obligation to several friends, to whom I gratefully express my thanks. These are chiefly due to the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell and to Sir Robert Hudson, who have read the proofs of my work, and given me the kindliest assistance and advice. Mr Charles Sturge also has been most generous in helping me in my researches.

The Little House,
Burford, Oxfordshire.

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CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTIES

THE year 1880 opened in the midst of a fog unparalleled in our annals, which almost without intermission brooded over London from November 1879 to the following February. This gloom—bad for the health, depressing to the spirits, obscuring the outlook—might well have been an emanation of the feelings of Englishmen; for in nearly every department of the national life at that moment were lowered health, depression and uncertainty. Trade, which for several years past had been struggling with falling prices, had reached a point approaching stagnation. A soaking and inclement summer in 1879 had ruined the crops; in every cornfield the shocks had stood blackened and sprouting, till the farm-hands could scarcely tear the sheaves apart. The complete failure of the harvest, coming after years of steady decline in the price of corn, brought to a head the discontent of agriculturists. It immediately made itself felt in London, where the season of 1880 was marked by a shrunken list of entertainments; one ball a night, instead of two or three, showed that rent-rolls had been affected. Agricultural depression, as a social grievance, may be said to date from this bad summer. In Ireland such a summer had brought its inevitable result; famine had taken cruel hold before the Duchess of Marlborough's relief fund was instituted. Hyde Park saw already those gatherings of the unemployed which in the next years were to force upon public attention a problem to which no year brought the solution. In South Wales the ironworks were battling

with a market in which, between 1873 and 1879, the price of sheet-iron had fallen from £18 to £9 a ton. In Sheffield a survey of the condition of fifty-one limited liability companies showed that only sixteen of them had their shares above par; fifteen had either compounded with their creditors or been wound up; and the total depreciation of their share capital was put at three and a half millions.[1] The Potteries were witnessing disputes about wages; in Lancashire there were despondent attempts to set on foot great emigration schemes, or to devise "short time" agreements for working three weeks of the month.

Affairs of State presented no more cheering aspect. The two political parties were wrangling over embroilments abroad that, while heavily burdening the national finances and demanding attention which should have been occupied at home, were beginning to appear to the bulk of the nation as gratuitous and perverse. In Afghanistan our arms were engaged in a war that looked like involving us in all the cost and blood of a permanent occupation. In South Africa we were confronting the resentment roused by that first annexation of the Transvaal which was to prove so inadequately considered. In South-Eastern Europe we were entangled in a diplomatic situation which might at any time issue in war. Meanwhile the national finances showed a deficit of six millions; Lord Beaconsfield's Government had increased warlike expenditure from twenty-five millions to thirty-two and a quarter millions a year; the Revenue accounts betrayed gravely decreased spending power in the nation; customs receipts had fallen by a million, excise by nearly two millions, and income tax by a quarter of a million.

Socially, too, though the world of the great did not lack brilliant figures, the season of 1880 was overcast by the prevailing dullness, and was one which put to its record

[1] *The Times*, 23rd December 1880.

no great event, "none of the accustomed star progresses of Shahs, Sultans and Emperors," [1] no great work of art, and no great novel; for Beaconsfield's *Endymion*, though its publication was an exciting event, did not, in a literary sense, redeem the year's reputation. Society was still adorned by Lord Houghton, and occasionally by Lord Beaconsfield and Bernal Osborne; Sir William Harcourt and Sir George Trevelyan were at the height of their dinner-party fame, Mr Gladstone was "talking shop like a tenth Muse," and Lord Salisbury was sharpening conversation with his cynicism. This world was moreover in the very process of being widened, alike in its interests and its outlook, by that falling of barriers which, admitting first of all poetry in the persons of Tennyson and Browning, painting in the persons of Leighton and Millais, and less defined artistic gifts in the fascinating and erratic Laurence Oliphant, was on the verge of something like surrender to the coruscations of Whistler and Oscar Wilde. The process was not yet complete, though it had advanced speedily, as anyone may see who compares Thackeray's *Book of Snobs* with *Punch* for 1880. The direct advance of the middle-class tide did not appear very great; its real advance was by creeks and inlets. Sir Gorgius Midas, returning home late to find only six footmen awake to open the door to him, is as easy game for *Punch* as De Mogyns, with his flunkeys in peach-coloured liveries and pea-green plush breeches, had been to Thackeray. Frontal assault by huge wealth and bad breeding had not advanced far; but in subordinate ways change was appearing. A generation had come up in which not only were the sons of tradesmen sent to great public schools, but the tradesmen themselves had been there; *Punch* could portray a duke dining with his tailor, and complaining of the fit of his trousers, to which the tailor replies that the duke,

[1] *The Times*, 30th July 1880.

ever since he had been the tailor's fag at Eton, had been a whimperer. Then again, the old narrow circle of the well-born was growing bored with itself, and if a woman like *Punch's* Mrs Ponsonby de Tomkyns, a social climber, but a shrewd, decent, capable body, liked to give great parties, and angle desperately for guests, society had no objection to providing the guests. A certain awkward period of transition was past. The old days, in which the great world had moved on an exalted stage—its normal doings, its gambling, its passions canvassed by all the town—had passed away, with its outward signs of rich dress, ornate vehicles and footmen on the board. In those days men of the great world made all kinds of excursions into other worlds—spent nights in the London dancing gardens, hours in furtive cockfighting pits, were patrons of prizefighters, mingled in all the raffish underlife of jockeys, horse-copers, night-houses, and West End bars. They disported freely, because their world was unapproachably theirs; and there were no means of unlocking its doors from outside. Since those days changing ideas, growth of immense middle-class wealth, had practically made an end of the old "high life." It may, in fact, be said to have died with the sixties. There had followed a period in which society had still tried to oppose oncoming forces; but it had had traitors within its camp. Men like Lord St Aldegonde in *Lothair* had begun applying ancient self-confidence in new ways. No one could ever really rival them; so why should they, for the sake of separating themselves in appearances, be missing new openings for pleasure? A fresh element had been introduced into national life by the development in the middle classes on the one hand of a new athleticism and on the other of an exquisiteness of their own. Society, looking over its barriers, saw that with its old-fashioned "lions of a season," its beards and moustaches of the Crimea, its exclusive traditions of sport, it was really

engaged in things that were *vieux jeu*. By now, rowing had travelled far outside the universities, and the veriest Cockney could laugh at Ouida's dandy flinging away his cigar, leaping into an eight, and stroking it to victory. Lawn tennis, which has done more for the mental enfranchisement of the middle class than has been recognised, was at the height of its first popularity in 1880; and *Punch's* title-page for the year shows the Four Seasons carrying racquets, with Toby tightening up a net. Cycling was making headway, football clubs were increasing rapidly. The very sneers which aristocracy aimed at these forms of athleticism show how completely the ordinary people were developing a world of their own; and were able to forget recent days in which any proclivities towards sport involved for them either pretentiousness, or the parasitic life of a "Mr Sponge." As for the new exquisiteness, society had waked to the spectacle of clean-shaven young men, and women in gowns with no waists but much embroidery, cultivating "intenseness" and "living beautifully." These were the new amusements open to society. The set called "the Souls" came into being, brilliant figures like Mr Arthur Balfour and Lady Granby moving in languid grace, and acquiring "the Grecian Bend," neighboured by the Cimabue Browns, Postlethwaite, and Maudle of *Punch*. At this time *Patience* was presented to a delighted world; and Gorgius Midas Junior complained that his millions brought him less deference in great houses than was shown to "some artist feller." Even a short list of those present at an evening party in 1881 includes the names of Mr Whistler and Mr Oscar Wilde with that of the Prince of Wales.[1]

Nevertheless in 1880—perhaps because there was so much to make the year a grave one—the tone of the season seems to have been set, not by the new "intensity," but by the old seriousness of that "evangelising" group

[1] *The Times*, 4th June 1881.

which was still so strong and occupied a position strange to modern eyes—Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Harrowby, Lord and Lady Mount Temple, Lord Kinnaird, the Buxtons and Samuel Morley.[1] Mention of this group is a reminder that, even in the sphere of the Church, the year 1880 was one of gloom and embroilment. The tedious proceedings against ritualistic practices at St Alban's, Holborn, were still, after five years, dragging on; the Rev. T. P. Dale was haled to prison in November for not complying with the requirements of the Court of Arches in regard to his church in the City; and in the same month prosecutions were set on foot in respect to St Vedast's, London, Bordesley, and Miles Platting. The strength of the Evangelical party at this date was seen also in the appointment of Dr Ryle in March to the vacant Deanery of Salisbury; this choice of a notable parish priest and writer of tracts, for an office hitherto associated with scholarly and donnish rather than with pastoral distinction, being regarded as a striking departure from custom. It is a mere coincidence, though an interesting one, that in this year, in May, the Young Men's Christian Association purchased for £25,000 Exeter Hall, the very name of which had already become a synonym for Evangelicalism. Indeed the cursory eye regarding the appearances made by the Church in records of current events finds them hardly less out of humour than those of other national activities. Beyond the ritual question the only matter in which the Church bulked largely in the newspapers was in its resentment of the Burial Act; in September the papers contained long controversies as to the power of parish clergy to charge increased fees to Nonconformists, to refuse the use of the church bells at Nonconformist funerals, and other such pettinesses.

However, when we have recognised all the depression that existed, all the grounds for anxiety, and all the lack

[1] Lady St Helier's *Memories of Fifty Years.*

of inspiration, it has to be said that the time was certainly not one of paralysis. At least two inventions of the foremost importance made in this year their first advances in England, and made them with great rapidity. The year had hardly opened before it was announced that Mr Edison's "carbon electric lamp" had reached the stage of practical serviceableness the world had been awaiting.[1] At the end of February Dr Lyon Playfair had partially lighted his town house by electricity; in April the new light was at work in Aldersgate Street Station, and in December thirty-four lights were installed at Paddington Station. But although this year first established electric lighting in England, and though its development was immediate, some years had to elapse before it became a really practical method of lighting. As yet every installation was an affair of a separate producing plant, with the result that, besides being too expensive for private houses except as a hobby, it was also too tiresome. Thus, when installed in Her Majesty's Theatre in July it annoyed the audience by the persistent "thrumming" of the dynamo. Its other uses in this year were chiefly on the sea. An Orient liner, the *Chimborazo*, was equipped with it in June, the lights used, though described as "incandescent," being not what were later called incandescent lamps, but arc lights of 70 c.p. The more significant development at the moment was the use of the light for naval purposes; the potentialities of its high power were at once perceived, and by the middle of April two warships, the *Minotaur* and the *Agincourt*, had astounded the dwellers at Gibraltar by suddenly turning upon the Rock beams of a light hitherto unknown. The name of "searchlight" had yet to be invented, and the general opinion among the garrison officers was hardly favourable to the new invention; it made, they thought, the ships themselves an excellent mark.

[1] *The Times*, 5th January 1880.

The second invention, which equally found its development somewhat checked, though in a different way, was the telephone. It had already gained so much ground in England that in January 1880 there was talk of action by the Postmaster-General to restrain an enterprise which was likely to cut into the profits of the telegraph service. It was doubtful if he could establish his case that a telephone message was a kind of telegram, and therefore an infringement of monopoly; but it seemed to be certain that he would make the attempt—certain, indeed, that he could not afford to do otherwise. For at this time the telephone was expected to render telegrams as obsolete as the electric light would make gas; there was not any idea of the extent to which the two earlier inventions would continue to exist alongside the two new ones. The Postmaster-General's action was entered, and came on late in November, the Attorney-General, on his behalf, suing the Edison Telephone Company. At the same time the Post Office Authorities could not fail to perceive that it was impossible to deprive the public of the new facilities; if the telephone were a kind of telegraph then the public would have a right to demand a telephone service from the telegraph authorities. Consequently in December the Post Office was ordering 200,000 Gower-Bell telephones. Meanwhile a good deal of interest was being taken in the first working uses of the invention; in April, for instance, lines were run from several chambers in the Temple to the Law Courts (then still at Westminster) and the Houses of Parliament, the wires being carried along the District Railway. In some other large towns the new idea had been more extensively taken up; early in July there were cries of alarm about the danger and inconvenience of the network of overhead telephone wires in Liverpool and other places.[1]

The Post Office had real ground for anxiety in face of

[1] *The Times*, 9th July 1880.

this invention. The State purchase of the telegraph system had just succeeded, after ten years, in proving itself a good bargain. The telegraph revenue for 1879 had been £1,452,489, and the expenditure £1,111,547. But the demand for postal facilities was ever growing. A favourite scheme at this time was one of pneumatic despatch-boxes to be set up in the streets, whereby the public could shoot its telegrams into the post offices. Then there was a demand for a parcel post, transmitting small parcels "at uniform rates payable by adhesive stamps"; and another demand was in process of being met by the Money Order Bill before Parliament this year. It is interesting to note that this last proposal had no small opposition to encounter. Several Chambers of Commerce, including so important a chamber as that of Manchester, lodged petitions against it on the ground that the issue of postal notes would damage certain private enterprises, like the Cheque Bank, which had hitherto supplied a form of easily negotiable paper money. Another point of interest—a side-light on new commercial methods which we shall have to consider later—was that some advocates of the demand for money orders argued that they would promote shopping with big firms, and give people in the country the chance to avail themselves of the lower prices which the large stores then coming into existence were able, by the size of their dealings, to offer. In view of the ever-growing requirements of the public the Post Office may well have been disturbed by anything which threatened its one source of trading profit. It may be noted here, though it is not strictly a Post Office matter, that the "newly opened line of telegraph to South Africa" had begun working in January 1880. Its first important message conveyed the news of the arrest of the President of "the Committee of Boers in the Transvaal" which had been concentrating the local resentment of annexation—

a message ominous of the kind of work which was to fall on that cable in later years.

An invention of a different kind, which in the end affected the spending powers and prosperity of the poorer classes in England to a degree not foreseen at the time, also reached in 1880 the point of practical working. It was announced on 3rd February that the steamship *Strathleven* had arrived in London from Australia with 70 bullock carcasses, 500 sheep carcasses, and two tons of butter. She had left Sydney and Melbourne in December and had arrived with the supplies in "perfectly sound condition." Now the importation of meat preserved by low temperatures was not a new thing. For some time carcasses had been brought from America, but the chambers in which they had been conveyed were kept cool with blocks of ice. The system of chambers refrigerated by machines practically dates from 1880.[1] However, in spite of new methods of storage, the trade would not have developed so rapidly as it did but for a curious and almost accidental circumstance. By enabling meat to be brought from Australia and New Zealand (distances over which ice-cooled chambers could not have been made to pay) refrigeration tapped an astoundingly cheap market. Till this time the great sheep-runs of those colonies had been worked on the wool-profits entirely; the carcasses were regarded as practically worthless. Consequently when sheep carcasses first became, thanks to the new refrigeration, of marketable value, there was no difficulty in obtaining them cheaply enough to allow the importers to face a long period of prejudice and experiment. For some time the meat was criticised, and even abused; the first shipment showed an adverse balance to the importers of £19 on the cargo, the beef having been sold at an average of 5¼d. a lb., and the mutton at an average of 5d. Never-

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article on Refrigerating, by T. B. Lightfoot.

theless in November an "Australian Fresh Meat Company" was floated, with a capital of £300,000; and the keenness of the sheep-owner in the Antipodes for a source of profit hitherto undreamt of was at work to break down the prejudices of Smithfield Market, and to give the English workman more butcher's meat in a month than his fathers had in a year.

Nor was it the workman only whose resources were enlarged. The daily menu of comparatively well-to-do families had been extremely limited. The occasion of a trade exhibition in Germany, at which a display of American "canned goods" was made, served *The Times* for a homily on the lack of variety in English catering. It wrote[1]: "No nation in the world has so narrow a code of clean articles of food as ours." Householders of moderate means rarely afforded fish, mutton was "suspected and avoided," poultry "lacked flavour and strength," and pork was "less acceptable above stairs than below." Vegetables, moreover, must have been a luxury in small houses. An indictment of the greengrocer's profits reveals the fact that the retail price of a cucumber in September 1880 was 10d., of a pound of runner beans, 6d., and of a cauliflower, 8d. Even so, the housekeepers had not complained; the indictment came from the grower, who felt himself to be getting an inadequate share of the profit.[2] Dairy produce was hardly procurable at a more reasonable cost, fresh butter being normally at 1s. 7d. a pound. It is probable, however, that many town families felt this pinch less, since the Margarine Act was not yet in existence, and much must have passed for butter which was not butter at all. It was, for instance, noted as curious that, though oleomargarine never had a price quoted in the market reports, and was not displayed in shop-windows, a lawsuit about patent royalties elicited the fact that the sale of this

[1] *The Times*, 22nd April 1880. [2] Ditto, 18th September 1880.

compound amounted to 98,000,000 lbs.[1] But whatever may have been the facts about other foods the question of the meat supply was the only one formulated. The general supply had been restricted by severe Government prohibition imposed on the importation of live animals owing to fears of cattle disease[2]; and drastic regulations as to the movement of live cattle from the Metropolitan Meat Market had caused real shortage of food in seaside places and country towns.[3] It was high time that a new traffic in dead meat should be established; and it is not difficult to see that the security for a new venture lay in the middle-class demand. There is no mistaking the calibre of the letters on the subject to the newspapers. Certain persons complained of the toughness of the meat, its bad colour; others wrote of the precise way to treat it, especially the necessity for long and slow thawing; and in their phrases describing the excellences of the meat when so treated, how it "cut firm and tender under the knife," "the quality of the gravy in the well," there is all the ponderous interest in eating, all the detailed affection for a joint, that Dickens portrayed in his middle-class fathers.

"Sweetness and light" had, as we have seen, affected the upper strata of the middle class with unhealthy violence in the shape of the æsthetic movement. It had led also to advances in education, which were in some respects slightly fevered, and ladies of very distinguished learning—Dr Sophia Jex-Blake, Dr Garrett Anderson, Miss Lucy Harrison, for instance—were becoming perturbed by what they considered to be over-pressure in girls' schools.[4] There was sanity enough, however, in the way educational advances were affecting the business man's idea of his business; and Matthew Arnold might have

[1] *The Times*, 28th April 1880.
[2] Ditto, 20th July 1880.
[3] Ditto, 23rd May 1881.
[4] See, e.g., *The Times*, 15th April 1880.

begun to feel he had not preached to deaf ears when Professor Huxley, speaking at the opening of Mason College, Birmingham, on 1st October, in this year, celebrated the passing of the day when the men and the methods of science were pooh-poohed by the men of business. On 13th July the court of the new Victoria University held its first meeting, the characteristics of the University being, first, that for the attainment of its degrees it required attendance at prescribed courses of lectures, thus differing from the University of London; and secondly, that it was designed to federate a number of colleges—Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield. Akin to the spirit of these matters was the announcement, on 30th July, of the first instance of an offer which was to become in time a familiar, almost a national, institution. Mr Andrew Carnegie had written from New York to the Provost of Dunfermline, offering to present the town with a free library. It is not difficult, again, to trace the growing concern for reality in education in the deputation which waited upon the Board of Education in July from the Manchester Kindergarten Society, and other such societies, urging the adoption of kindergarten methods in elementary schools. The Board, however, had too much other business on hand. It had not yet succeeded in perfecting its machinery. School Boards had had ten years of existence, but though they had done much they were still far from the ideal of provision for every child. In London the total child population of school age was reckoned in 1880 at 740,377. The voluntary schools had accommodation for 269,469, the Board Schools for 225,236, a total of 494,705. But the average attendance was as yet only 373,701—just about half the juvenile population.

The expansion of provincial university education is a subject which will confront us again later. It was one aspect of that growing civic activity which, though it might be despised by the fastidious and the æsthetic

as a mere exaltation of the material and the parochial, was a very genuine piece of middle-class self-assertion. Such cities as Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, and especially Birmingham, had for some time before this history opens been developing their resources and enlarging the scope of the services they offered their citizens. Gas companies, water companies, tramway companies had been made aware that no monopoly would be allowed to remain in private hands; the principle of ultimate right of purchase by the Corporation was well established. Yet, great as previous developments had been, the year 1880 serves none the less well in this matter too as a fresh starting point. It witnessed the first successful flotation of Consolidated Municipal Stock; and this was a very important departure, for hitherto the capital expenditure of corporations had had to be met by loans from the Public Works Loan Commissioners, from banks, insurance companies and private lenders. These arrangements involved varying rates of interest, from 5 per cent. to 3¾ per cent., the keeping of separate sinking funds, and separate approaches to Parliament or the Local Government Board for powers for new works. In the early seventies some corporations had adopted the idea of a Suspense Account, into which money borrowed at low rates was paid to be used for the liquidation of loans. Then arose the idea of a Corporation Debenture Stock, the Birmingham Finance Committee drawing up a scheme for such an issue in 1876,[1] and although the Local Government Board considered itself unable to sanction the proposal, an attempt was made in the following year to raise a million and a half of debenture stock. Prospectuses were published, but only £300,000 were subscribed, and the attempt failed. The first success in the venture was achieved by the Liverpool Corporation, which issued on

[1] For this subject I have drawn largely on Mr J. T. Bunce's *History of the Corporation of Birmingham*.

1st September 1880 two millions of stock, under the Liverpool Loans Act. Sir W. B. Forwood, who had been chiefly responsible for the Act, told the Corporation that "it had been a difficult and intricate matter to get the Bill through, because the Liverpool Corporation were the first in the kingdom to obtain powers to fund their debt in the way proposed."[1] But Birmingham was close on Liverpool's heels with its second attempt. Instead of proceeding by a Loans Act, with all the cost of a private Bill, the Corporation applied to the Local Government Board for a provisional order to amend and partially repeal some local Acts and Orders, so as to enable the Corporation to issue a consolidated stock in which trustees who were empowered to invest in Government securities might invest. This method of procedure nearly wrecked the enterprise, for although the Board, after public inquiry, made the Order, the Bill confirming it was opposed by Lord Redesdale on the ground that the Board was exceeding its powers. However he finally withdrew his opposition on condition that the question of the Board's powers was raised in Parliament. The Bill passed. It had cost the Corporation only £70, and it would save thousands. The calculation in the case of Liverpool was that £25,000 or £30,000 a year would be saved by the raising of a large sum at a single, comparatively low, rate of interest. What was more important from the public point of view was, first, that municipalities had discovered a new form of financial power in the exercise of which the Local Government debt of the United Kingdom rose to six hundred millions in 1910; and, secondly, that they had found a way of attracting the general investor, and had no longer to borrow, in the old sense of the word.

The provision of a new field for investments could not have come at a better time than this. The possibilities

[1] *The Times*, 2nd September 1880.

of the new field were not, however, fully perceived at the moment, and its opening did nothing to cure the special source of depression in this depressing year—the state of the money market. The year, as it progressed, brought a revival of trade; the signs were hopeful as early as February, and another summer of rain and flood could not disguise the fact that business was recovering. Yet revival brought with it a new uneasiness. The money market was not comfortable. Not only were Consols very high, but all good stocks were high with them. There had been for long, *The Times* remarked,[1] no war to cause new issues, no great economic changes, such as the invention of railways, or extensive measures of colonisation. The general result was an accumulation of privately held capital which might, on a recovery of trade, be a temptation to the reckless floating of new enterprises, and consequent financial disturbance. Fears were expressed later on in the year that some of the new impulsion of business was really—in the iron trade, for instance—only speculative. Other conditions, besides prices and production, were affecting the market. It was never decided beyond question, even in all the discussions of the great period of bimetallism, precisely how the shortage of gold, which became so serious between 1880 and 1890, affected trade and industry. That it had some direct effect may be taken for granted, since otherwise the bimetallic theory would never have gained ground. One indirect effect is certain. The "tightness," so to speak, of the coinage, while producing a nominal lowering of prices, tended to keep wages from rising; and was thus responsible for some of the force which at this time the agitations of working people assumed. Masters of industry in every part of the country were nervous about the strikes that might be expected to accompany a revival of trade.

Not that the working class agitations were entirely a

[1] 29th July 1880.

matter of wages. In one of the great industries, then as now the most highly organised on the side of the employees —the cotton industry—observers already thought they saw signs of a spirit which we shall find at its full activity later. As yet the idea was only expressed in a vague and obviously prejudiced form, *The Times* venturing the opinion, when labour troubles in Lancashire became serious in the autumn, that the real cause at the back of the agitation was not a matter of wages but "a struggle for mastery."[1] The opinion, though crudely expressed, was shrewd. The trade unions had attained to such numbers that they felt the day within sight when they should command practically all the working hands of the country. At the Trade Union Congress in September of this year the delegates represented an aggregate of 600,000 members, the strongest unions being the miners, with 50,000 members; the engineers, with 45,000; the boilermakers, with 20,000; and the railway workers, with 15,000. They were already strengthening themselves by alliance with the Co-operative Societies, a meeting between representatives of the two movements taking place later in September. The wages question, arising more acutely from the shortage of gold coinage, was undoubtedly an immediate cause of strikes (the cotton trade dispute ended in December with the masters "risking" an advance in wages), but there was a predisposing cause of a more far-reaching nature. We shall have to record, under 1881, the foundation of the Social Democratic Federation in London. Whether or no it be true that the British working man had been affected by contact with the refugees fleeing to England from the repressive measures taken in France after the Commune, and by Bismarck a few years later in Germany, it seems at least certain, as William Morris put it,[2] that "there was no longer, among the mass

[1] *The Times*, 18th September 1880.
[2] Mackail's *Life of William Morris*, ii. 81.

of the working class in London, any decided hostility to Socialism." But whatever suspicions may have been growing of a spirit among workmen that was looking for more fundamental advances than in wages, nothing seems to have been less present to the minds of politicians in 1880, as they approached and passed through a General Election, than uneasiness about the conditions of the temper of the working man. Yet it is fair to add that the broadly determining influence in that election was such a revulsion of feeling in the direction of domestic and internal politics that the nation might well have looked forward to having its house drastically set in order.

CHAPTER II

THE GENERAL ELECTION, 1880

YET to speak of the General Election of 1880 as offering a prospect of national spring-cleaning is to give a positive description to what was mainly a negative movement. The distinction is necessary, because in the following five years the prevalence of a habit of confounding different matters under the common title of "Beaconsfieldism" was to lead the reforming party into disaster; dislike of the positions in which Beaconsfield had left Great Britain in various parts of the world was to become, in more than one case, a refusal to deal with those positions, hardly distinguishable from carelessness.

The tone and pitch of this election were entirely set by Mr Gladstone; the campaign which was to bring the Liberals triumphantly to power being really begun at the close of 1879. The events of 1878, the Russo-Turkish War, the subsequent inflaming of bellicose spirit in England, and the secret agreements with Russia and Turkey that accompanied the Berlin Conference—had all touched Mr Gladstone in one of his tenderest spots: Turkey and her dependencies in Europe. He had used a phrase very significant of the line his thought was taking —"the people want a little more experience of Beaconsfield Toryism"[1]—before the occurrence of two events which fitted exactly into his case. Affairs in South Africa, already made ticklish enough by the annexation of the Transvaal, were rendered more depressing by a campaign undertaken, as it seemed even to the Government,

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 583.

somewhat wantonly against the Zulus. More serious still, the Ameer of Afghanistan having failed to accede to what the Government demanded of him by way of recognition of the weight of British influence in his affairs, war had been undertaken in Afghanistan also.

To these developments, which wore to Mr Gladstone's mind the true Disraelian stamp of cynical disregard of righteousness, add the inevitable corollary of the burden on the national finances, and what more burningly inspiring text could a man of Mr Gladstone's political tradition have found to his hand? When the Liberal Committee of Mid-Lothian invited him in 1879 to contest that division, and he accepted the invitation, he was, by a sure political instinct, giving himself at once an inspiring audience and the stimulus of a difficult fight. He had declined in the previous year to stand again for Greenwich, his seat at that date; he had remained unpersuaded by the offer of a safe seat in Edinburgh. The Mid-Lothian suggestion gave him the chance of striking the blow at his own time, and not at what time Lord Beaconsfield might choose to dissolve. Towards the end of November 1879 he went into Scotland, and the next fortnight witnessed the historic "Mid-Lothian Campaign." In these days of far more widely spread newspaper reading, and the consequent organisation of reporting from outlying centres, it is necessary to remind ourselves of the violently outstanding methods of this campaign. Political platform-speaking then was restricted within limits generally recognised and accepted. Such speeches as were reported were placed under the rather odd heading "Parliament Out of Session," which by itself is enough to suggest that these efforts were regarded as mere aftermath. There was one other form in which they were recognised. It was tacitly admitted that the ordinary practice of members of the House in addressing themselves to their constituents once a year or so had in some instances an interest beyond

the bounds of the constituency. Reports of the speeches of such men appeared under the heading: "The Member for Oxford," or "Westminster," or "Birmingham," a form of title which made even Mr Chamberlain's Radical pronouncements somewhat muffled. Nothing approaching the present mobility of notable speakers, or the frequent platform appearances of leading figures outside their own constituencies, existed in those days. In a general election such appearances were made, but not often. Mr Gladstone lived to deplore our modern fashion; but his Mid-Lothian campaign was largely responsible for its origin.[1]

Further, it was not only the unusualness of such a series of speeches which roused the public mind; it was also the fact that Mr Gladstone was making them. He had retired from the leadership of his party in 1874; he had even intimated that he did not intend to face another general election; and here he was taking the field in a way so marked and so far out of the ordinary political course that the public could only draw one conclusion. Mr Gladstone himself never displayed his intellectual peculiarities more strikingly than in the absence of any such conclusion from his own mind; for some months to come he spoke of the question of the leadership as out of his own hands, in a manner that must have been exasperating to less subtle-minded colleagues. The British public entertained no doubts. The crowds at the principal stations at which his train stopped on the way to Edinburgh, the enthusiasm in Scotland, and the reception of what Beaconsfield called "this drenching rhetoric," all meant one thing—the ushering back of Mr Gladstone to leadership.

Mr Gladstone's tone, then—his choice of subjects during the Mid-Lothian campaign—set the tone of the election. It was, in spite of its trumpet-call appearance, essentially

[1] See *Saturday Review*, 29th November 1879.

negative.[1] The Government's foreign policy, the Government's bad finance and growing deficit, might, indeed, in Mid-Lothian speeches, be the text of the plea for righteousness among nations and a restoration of national resources; but practically the appeal was only for that result which Mr Gladstone himself described after the triumph as "the downfall of Beaconsfieldism."[2] He might tell one of his audiences that "he had come down expressly to raise effectually before the people of the country the question in which manner they wished to be governed"[3]; but in fact the General Election amounted to no more than asking whether they wished to be governed in the Beaconsfield way, or not. Sir William Harcourt, addressing a great meeting in January, devoted himself entirely to denouncing the Government for "recklessly pursuing an Asiatic policy"; and a week later, in Birmingham, the heart then of Radicalism, devoted his speech to the evils of jingoism (still a new word) and the Afghan War.

This was, obviously, the soundest fighting policy. And as no campaign can be purely negative, in the background of this one were certain promises of domestic legislation. Chief among them was a proposed equalisation of the county franchise with the borough franchise—the charter of the agricultural labourer. There were also schemes for the establishment of representative County Government, amendment of the laws of land transfer and settlement, and a system of municipal government for London. It is plain from this list that the favourite phrase of economic writers of this time, "the era of administration has come," was influencing the politicians. Still it was the negative rather than any positive line of attack which kept—perhaps alone could keep—the Liberal leaders

[1] *The Times*, 1st April, had a leader expressing concern lest the election should be taken by Continental nations as expressing complete repudiation of concern in European interests.

[2] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 615.

[3] Ditto, ii. 588.

together. Lord Hartington, the leader of the party in the Commons, was very cool on the extension of the franchise; Lord Granville, the chief, as an ex-Foreign Minister, was little interested in domestic affairs; Harcourt was already Mr Gladstone's staunch lieutenant, and had his faithful eye mainly on Turkey. The franchise question, in any case, was one with which the Tories had coquetted; and though it may have carried some votes it can hardly have counted heavily. Beaconsfield, with his extraordinary prophetic gift, raised in his manifesto to the country in March 1880 the question of the government of Ireland, and sought to fasten upon the Liberals five years before its time the odium of a separatist policy. Ireland, however, was not as yet a real problem to English electors. Battle was joined on the ground Mr Gladstone had taken.

Some surprise was felt at its coming when it did. The Mid-Lothian campaign had lighted such a flare that men expected Beaconsfield to wait for some chance of damping it, even if slightly, before a dissolution of Parliament. The dissolution was announced on 6th March; and the accepted explanation of that early date is that Beaconsfield was misled into a false estimate of the feeling of the country by the results of two bye-elections, in February, at Liverpool and in Southwark. In both the Liberal candidate had been beaten, and Southwark moreover was a seat gained to the Tories. It seems possible, however, in view of the fact that Beaconsfield's manifesto attempted to divert the minds of the electors to the Irish question, that what influenced him was not so much the mere return of Tories for these seats as the fact that in Liverpool the Home Rule cry had been employed in the fight. The Irish had made the Liberal candidate commit himself to a promise to vote for "an inquiry into the nature and extent of the Irish demand for self-government."[1] A storm had been raised at the bare possibility of treating

[1] *The Times*, 5th February 1880.

Home Rule as a valid question. Lord Hartington, moreover, had taken the line that it was a matter for the individual decision of members; and this indication of uncertainty in the Liberal ranks may have appealed to Beaconsfield as a useful opening for driving in his wedge. Unfortunately for him this occurrence of the Home Rule demand was an isolated case. The brief month during which Parliament sat, from 6th February to 6th March, had not been long enough to give the Irish members the chance for which, under Parnell, they were ready; and the strategy Beaconsfield attempted proved impracticable. The elections went heavily against him. On the first day's results, on 31st March, the Liberals had a net gain of 15 seats in 69 constituencies; by the end of the second week of the election their net gains stood at 99; and finally the new Parliament showed itself composed of 347 Liberals, 240 Conservatives and 65 Irish Nationalists.

Mr Gladstone's own election was, as his speech-making had been, the centre of importance. The interest taken in it gives us a sidelight on what must have been the last of old electoral methods—a survival due to the absence of reform from the county franchise. One of the first points that occurred to him in taking up the candidature for Mid-Lothian was the matter of "faggot" votes. The qualification in those days for the county franchise was the possession of a 40s. freehold, or a £10 copyhold, or a £50 leasehold, or an occupation valued at £12. It was not difficult, with sufficient money at command, to manufacture these votes; and Mr Gladstone, franchise reformer though he was, was too old a hand to be a purist; he had fought his first election before the Reform Bill. So now the answer to Conservative faggotting was Liberal faggotting; and *The Times* of 27th January 1880 contains a curious and interesting article on the running-up of houses in Edinburgh, but just over the county border,

to give one hundred and sixty new owner and occupier votes on the Liberal side. The work went on night and day, and men stood at dusk in the light of the flares cheering for Gladstone. His majority at the declaration of the poll on 5th April was two hundred and nineteen.

Another feature of the election, though not one that was prominent in the newspapers, was that new ideas in party organisation were on trial on the Liberal side. In this, rather than in his legislative projects, is to be found the basis of the dislike and fear of Mr Chamberlain as a demagogue. A generation more accustomed than our own to exalt a classical education used its words nicely, and "demagogue" to it meant less the producer of measures appealing to the masses than a man who organised the masses. Judged merely by his legislative proposals Mr Chamberlain showed no terrifying face. The Employers Liability Bill, of which he was in charge as President of the Board of Trade, was, after all, very much a corollary of the Factory Acts; and for the rest Mr Chamberlain's own programme, as announced by him at Birmingham in October of that year, was devoted to such eminently middle-class questions as the reform of railway rates for goods traffic, of the bankruptcy laws, and of the patent laws. But his organising schemes were a different matter. In 1877 he had inaugurated a new means of handling electoral forces. Hitherto the choice of candidates and the management of electoral affairs had been in the hands of local committees, who corresponded, when necessary, with the party whips, but were essentially independent. Mr Chamberlain aimed at making organisation more democratic and more co-ordinated. The local associations were to be much larger, and to be popularly elected; and, secondly, they were to be federated under a central organisation which would give general orders, provide candidates, have a sanctioning voice in any local

choice of candidates, issue literature, and wield an army of speakers. This was perhaps the first matter in which his future Cabinet colleagues felt Mr Chamberlain's determination and force. He invited Lord Hartington to become the nominal head of the new system. Lord Hartington did not much take to it, and declined.[1] Mr Chamberlain went on his way, with a warning to his leader that he could not afford not to be associated with it. By 1880 the idea was so well advanced that after the election the "new democratic machinery" became a subject for letters to the newspapers from the more timid Liberals and the more bitterly disappointed Conservatives. One of the effects most dreaded was the enhanced power which such organisation might give to wealth in an election. Party funds would, it was thought, unduly turn the day, when they acted through a highly drilled system.

Lord Beaconsfield resigned on 21st April. The processes by which Mr Gladstone returned in actuality to that leadership which, in everyone's opinion but his own, he had assumed five months earlier, need not be set forth. They have been given to the world in the words of those who were concerned in them.[2] It is sufficient to say here that Lord Granville and Lord Hartington were so immovably agreed upon the impossibility of carrying on a Government without Mr Gladstone, and the equal impossibility of his occupying any but the chief place in a Government, that Queen Victoria had to give way. Mr Gladstone's Government[3] met the new Parliament on 20th May 1880.

It was a meeting full of enthusiasm, full of hope—and almost tragic to look back upon now. So fine a career

[1] Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, i. 244-249.

[2] See Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 620-628; Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, i. 273-293; Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*.

[3] See Appendix.

seemed to open before a Government with a majority clear of the Irish vote, pledged to end the policy which distracted politics with foreign adventure, and headed by a man who was a popular idol. Yet at the very threshold the new House met with a difficulty which, wasting its time, exasperating its temper, and dislocating its procedure, was typical of the barren wrangling in which the new forces were to expend themselves like a river trailing amid a waste of sand. Before it came to work, the House was suddenly divided by the question whether one of the new members for Northampton, Mr Charles Bradlaugh, who had, as an avowed atheist, declined to take the oath, could be allowed to take his seat. Mr Bradlaugh then professed himself ready to take the oath; but it was easy to rouse the House against the cynicism of such an attitude. The prolonged controversy which followed—continued debates in the House, discussions in the press, proceedings in the law courts, to which Mr Bradlaugh took the question of his rights—may in one respect be passed rapidly over. In this parliament he never sat. So curiously was the House cut asunder by this unforeseen problem that even when, in 1883, an Affirmation Bill, designed to relieve the difficulty, had the eloquent support of Mr Gladstone, it was thrown out by a majority of three. Removed more than once from the House by physical force, Mr Bradlaugh turned to great meetings in public halls and in the parks of London to try to break down the opposition that had such bewildering obstinacy. It was not until eight years later that he may be said to have won the case of principle, and eleven years later the personal case. In 1885 he was allowed to take the oath without any comment. But this silent passing-over of the tempest naturally did not satisfy him. In 1888 he secured the passing of an Affirmation Act, and in 1891, when he was on his death-bed, the resolution of 1881,

by which the House had finally asserted itself in the original controversy, was expunged from the records. But though the facts should be stated as briefly as possible, their significance must not be missed. In the House itself the most striking feature of the controversy was that it revealed the existence of a group on the Tory side which was to attain much notoriety during the life of this Parliament. For the first time members saw the co-operation between Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr Arthur Balfour, Sir John Gorst and Sir Henry Drummond-Wolff which earned them the name of "The Fourth Party." Dissatisfied with the leadership of Sir Stafford Northcote, who seemed to them dull and slow in action, formal in his methods, a slave to the conventions of politics, this group were as ready to scoff at their own Front Bench as to attack the other Front Bench. The formalities of Opposition would not have admitted the seizing of the opportunity offered by the case of Mr Bradlaugh; it exactly suited Lord Randolph's purposes. The existence of the Fourth Party affected the Government seriously throughout its career. The attacks of clever men, who had none of the traditions of holding office, had always to be met after the official answer on any question had been given to the Opposition leaders, and accepted by them in the official spirit which, as ex-Ministers, they were ready to display. Moreover, as was very soon noticed, Lord Randolph Churchill had a peculiar gift for "drawing" Mr Gladstone. The position which the Fourth Party attained was due not only to the scandalous notoriety attaching to a revolt against constituted leaders, but to the fact that Mr Gladstone's colleagues could never induce him to treat the group as irresponsible interlopers. However, the taste of their quality was a comparatively minor aspect of the Bradlaugh controversy. That had also a deeper significance.

It is true that the persistence of the House was largely due to the mere tactical value to the Opposition of a question in which the Government could not command its majority. Sir Stafford Northcote refused in 1881 overtures made to him by the Speaker with a view to reaching the solution of silence that was accepted in 1885. But it is beyond doubt that at the time that solution would only have left open the door of bitterness. We have to face the spectacle of a House, not without the approval of a very great part of the country, quite assuming its right to demand some form of religious conviction in a member; the spectacle, moreover, of intelligent men convinced that to be an atheist was to be morally untrustworthy, that to deny the existence of God was worse than "that form of opinion which would teach us that, whatever may be beyond the visible things of this world, whatever may be beyond this short span of life, you know and you can know nothing of it, and that it is a bootless undertaking to attempt to establish relations with it."[1] Perhaps after all the Bradlaugh controversy did no less in the end for genuine religious conviction than for the freedom of those who have no such conviction. It was one of the occasional shocks which force the pace of the whole-hearted in either direction.

But at the moment the effect of the controversy was one of barrenness and discouragement. The Radicals in the country perceived their great majority already "jockeyed." The position of Mr Bradlaugh himself can now be disentangled from the discussions, and estimated at its worth. The deep bewilderment of the moment arose from the almost diabolical cleverness with which the question was twisted in the House to a problem of religious liberty. *The Times* saw what had happened; "Mr Bradlaugh, admitted to the House, will be of just whatever account the House pleases. But Mr Bradlaugh and

[1] Mr Gladstone on the Affirmation Bill, 26th April 1883.

religious liberty together are not thus easily to be dealt with."[1] This was the first baiting of a Government which was to pass so much of its time with its head down to attacks in the House that it could rarely get a real outlook. In no matter was this lack of outlook more disastrous than in the question of the Transvaal. In alarm at the danger involved by the Boers' apparent inability to cope with native attacks in 1877—the danger that native successes against them might light an appalling conflagration—Sir Theophilus Shepstone had formally placed the Transvaal under British sovereignty. He had exceeded his instructions, which gave him no authority to proclaim annexation except on assurances that the step was in consonance with the wishes of the majority of the Boers. It was immediately made apparent that practically the whole Boer community was against it; yet the Conservative Government held to the annexation. Mr Gladstone expatiated on the wickedness of this in his Mid-Lothian denunciations; even Lord Hartington asserted that annexation in those circumstances could not be maintained; and public opinion must have been in some degree represented by *The Times* which wrote[2]: "We have to consider the welfare of the whole of the South African colonies, as well as the interests of the inhabitants of the Transvaal, and neither of these can be weighed in the balance against a mere reluctance to abandon a policy which was justified at one time by circumstances which have now passed away. . . . Englishmen will find it difficult to reconcile themselves to the forcible occupation of a country whose people declare that they have never been and do not wish to be her Majesty's subjects." The question was forced upon the Liberal Government's attention publicly in May by a memorial demanding the recall of Sir Bartle Frere, who

[1] Leading article, 29th June 1880.
[2] Ditto, 17th January 1880.

was identified with the policy of annexation. The sum of the Government's action in the matter during this year is that two months later Sir Bartle Frere was recalled; but the annexation was not cancelled. What does this contradictory conclusion mean? By itself it is astonishing; but taken in connection with those affairs in Egypt which will confront us later it appears susceptible of explanation. It may be thrown out here as a suggestion, to be supported hereafter, that this Cabinet more than once undertook the more difficult, in preference to the point-blank, solution of a problem; and then had not time or sufficient freedom from immediate worries to carry out adequately the task it had set itself. The Cabinet certainly undertook a complicated solution of the Transvaal difficulty, the reasons for which may perhaps be sought in the Prime Minister's character. Mr Gladstone in Mid-Lothian might thunder flat opposition to certain acts of state, to certain lines of policy; Mr Gladstone in office felt the habit of office close round him, a habit in which there are no violent and fundamental reversals. It may also have been, as matters turned out, somewhat unfortunate that the Turkish difficulty—to the almost laughable surprise and glee of Mr Gladstone—collapsed instantly on a tentative application of precisely the kind of pressure that Beaconsfield might have used; Mr Gladstone was capable of being attracted by the prospect of showing his great rival that mere reversals of policy were not the only way of governing better than he. At all events, it is certain that the reversal of the annexation was set aside in favour of a complicated series of moves whereby, federation having been first established in South Africa, local independence should follow; and the Boers be thus ultimately satisfied.[1] The federation schemes failed; Frere, whose retention in South Africa was for some weeks justified largely on the ground of his associa-

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii, 30.

tion with the federation plans, was recalled. The complicated moves crumbled at the first stage. To judge by the later analogy of Egypt, it would appear safe to assert that Mr Gladstone's interest was diverted, and the matter was all disastrously left drifting.

What was the diversion of interest? For one thing, Mr Gladstone was extraordinarily—one might say, for a Prime Minister, almost deplorably—interested in the daily proceedings of the House.[1] It was not a great session, but it bore some fruit: the first Employers Liability Act, establishing a system of compensation to workmen for injuries inflicted by defects in works, or machinery plant, or stock connected with the business, or by default of fellow-servants having superintendence or direction; the change of the Malt Tax into a Beer Duty, effected in the Budget; the Burial Bill, establishing the right of Nonconformists to inter their dead with the services of their own sect in parish churchyards. Another measure, introduced in this year, both gave the Prime Minister trouble in the Cabinet and, being ultimately rejected by the Lords, brought on, after the session had closed, the first acute stage of that Irish struggle which in the next few years was so to drain the energies of both the Government and the House of Commons. This was the Compensation for Disturbance Bill. Mr Gladstone had passed an Act in 1870 to meet the case of hardships suffered by tenants in Ireland who, on being turned out of their holdings, received no allowance for improvements they had made. But the Act had never worked well; there was no provision in it for valuing the improvements, and no provision that the rent should be a fair one, and it did not apply in cases in which the tenant owed as much as a year's rent. The case for an improved Act was strengthened by the bad harvests of 1878 and, especially, 1879,[2]

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 7, 8.
[2] *Cf. supra*, p. 15.

and the new Bill entitled the tenant to compensation if he could prove to the court (1) that he was unable to pay the rent; (2) that this was not from pure thriftlessness or idleness, but from the bad harvest of the current year, or of two preceding years; (3) that he was willing to continue his tenancy on just and reasonable terms as to rent and otherwise; (4) that these terms were unreasonably refused by the landlord.

There were not a few in the House of Commons who during the passage of this Bill perceived a warning in the person of a certain silent man. The new Parliament saw at the head of the Irish party a new leader, Charles Stewart Parnell. The House had some knowledge of his fighting power, and some reason to be disturbed by his accession to leadership. In the previous Parliament a profound change had come over the behaviour of the Irish party. Under Isaac Butt's leadership the Irish had for years pursued the patient course of introducing measures on Ireland's behalf and seeing them set by. They produced Bills for some form of Home Rule year after year, and were told: "Parliament will not, cannot grant Home Rule. The utmost favour which the House of Commons can show to its advocates is to listen to them with patience and courtesy once a year." [1] When the prevailing mind of important people in England could be stated in that form, something was bound to happen. Biggar and Parnell happened. When the latter entered the House in 1875 the former had already discovered the principle of obstruction; the new recruit, practically ignorant of politics [2] but full of hatred of England's attitude towards Ireland, swiftly seized the rudiments of the new methods, and there followed those famous all-night sittings in which four or five Irish members held up the whole business of the House by

[1] *The Times*, 20th April 1877.
[2] Barry O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*.

incessantly moving that progress be reported, or that the chairman leave the chair. But when the new Parliament met, there was in the minds of those who had eyes to see much more than the fear of mere repetition of these scenes, which in the old Parliament the leader of the party had disliked and disavowed. The fact that Butt had now ceased to be the leader was more than a menace to Parliamentary order. Hitherto Irish agitation had had two wholly separate currents. The Parliamentary agitation was a steady-going plea for self-government on a federal basis. The absolute separatist agitation, working through the Fenian methods, was carried on by the Clan-na-Gael in America and the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Ireland, Michael Davitt being the chief link between the two.[1] The leaders of this agitation wholly despised and repudiated the Parliamentary party. Now between the appearance of obstructive tactics in the House and the meeting of the new Parliament these two currents had ceased to be disconnected. That it is necessary to use so indefinite an expression is a tribute to the extreme strategic skill of which Parnell was master. All the enmity he aroused in England, all the watchfulness to catch him tripping, never succeeded in proving that he was a Fenian, or that Irish Nationalism and Fenianism were now one; and yet it was patent that they were no longer two. In December 1877 Michael Davitt had been released from prison on ticket-of-leave from the end of the sentence passed upon him for complicity in the Fenian outrages of 1867. Parnell met him in Dublin in January 1878. By that time the Clan-na-Gael had marked the rise and the effectiveness of the new spirit in the Irish Parliamentary party, to which Mr Barry O'Brien bears testimony: "'Had Davitt come to America in the beginning of 1877,' said a member of the Clan-na-Gael to me, 'he would have found a few men ready to discuss the new

[1] Parnell Commissioners' Report, p. 30.

departure and to favour it. But neither he nor we would have dared broach it at a public meeting of the League.' But a change had taken place in a twelvemonth. Parnell's action in Parliament had made people think that something might be done with Parliamentarianism after all." [1] Davitt went to America after that change, in August 1878. Moreover he went with a plan which provided a channel whereby the two currents of agitation might communicate. He had already devised the Land Campaign.

We shall miss the strength of this move if we do not recognise that the land question in Ireland was, if not actually different, susceptible of being made very different from any such question in England. In England land nationalisation is a political ideal on exactly the same footing as other political ideals. In Ireland the possession of land by the landlords could be represented as a form of English garrisoning. Parnell more than once spoke of the destruction of English landlordism as the key to Home Rule. The landlords were indeed for the most part English, and their relations with their tenants had in general none of that idealism which even at the worst has never been absent from these relations in England. Too often the landlord's attitude suggested that the Irish lived on a conquered land, and had no rights save such as the landlord chose to allow. This had been so obvious that there had been sufficient strength of feeling in England to carry more than one Land Act. "The landlord," wrote a chief secretary in the middle of last century, "had a monopoly of the means of existence. . . . 'The landlords in Ireland,' said Lord Donoughmore in 1854, 'have been in the habit of letting land, not farms.'" [2] These words sum up the problems of Irish land tenure—exorbitant rents, and eviction without

[1] Barry O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 165.
[2] Thomas Drummond's *Life and Letters*

compensation. Therefore the land agitation could be intimately associated with Home Rule; a subject—and this was the brilliant point of the conception—which the Clan-na-Gael could approach from one side, and the Parliamentary party from another, meeting no doubt in the middle, but never marching to it along the same line. The conception had immediate success. While Davitt was in America in 1878 a telegram was sent to Parnell offering the support of the Clan-na-Gael for the Parliamentary party on the conditions: (*a*) of the party's abandoning Butt's federal proposals and making a general declaration for self-government; (*b*) of the party's agitating the land question on a peasant proprietary basis, while accepting concessions tending to abolish arbitrary eviction; (*c*) of the party's voting together on all questions, adopting an aggressive policy, and energetically resisting coercive legislation.[1] Was not such a proposal, it may be asked, a complete conjunction of the two currents of agitation? It might have been—but Parnell never answered the telegram. It was the first occasion on which his famous gift of silence came into play. He did not accept the Clan-na-Gael's offer overtly. But on 7th June 1879 he appeared on a platform in Ireland with members of the Land League, which Davitt had founded at a meeting at Irishtown on 20th April, and on 21st October 1879 he was at the Dublin Conference at which the League was organised finally into the National Land League. Its main working clause set up an organisation among tenant farmers for defending those who might be threatened with eviction, for facilitating the working of the Land Act of 1870, and for obtaining such reform as would enable the tenant to become owner of the land by paying a fair rent for a limited number of years. Parnell was at first reluctant to accept the scheme; he saw, much as he disliked the

[1] Parnell Commissioners' Report, p. 9.

purely constitutional spirit of Isaac Butt, that the party's effectiveness in Parliament depended in no small degree upon not coming into contact with the law. But he decided that he must "take the risk,"[1] and it is a point of some importance that the Land League constitution contained no demand for the self-government of Ireland. That made it merely a weapon, and not, so to speak, a different impersonation of the Parliamentary party. The last point for this brief summary is that Parnell himself went to America in December 1879, and was hurriedly recalled for the General Election of 1880.

When the new Parliament met, there must therefore have been every ground for regarding the Irish party, thirty-five members of which were pledged Parnellites, with new apprehension. Yet it may be doubted whether actual apprehension was felt. The intervention of the Home Rule question in the Liverpool bye-election had, as we have said, been without any parallel in the General Election. Liberals had beaten Home Rulers in some Irish constituencies—Dundalk, Athlone, and Mallow, for instance. One cause of possible discomfort, which had been foreseen, was avoided by the fact that the Liberal majority did not depend upon the Irish; and no uneasiness was shown in the summary statement that "the Government may even approach once more the question of Irish university education; and it will certainly be expected to deal effectively in some way with the present condition of Ireland."[2] The serene reliance of the Ministerial party on Mr Gladstone's confidence in his own mission floated the Compensation for Disturbance Bill successfully through the House, and there were none but momentary qualms in face of Parnell's silence. That silence was obstinate. He was ready to see what the

[1] Parnell Commissioners' Report, p. 15.
[2] *The Times*, leading article, 17th April 1880.

new Government would do, but he would take no single step towards it. He would not answer the Clan-na-Gael's telegram, but he would equally not answer any signals from the English. He took practically no part in the proceedings on the Bill. It was thrown out, as has been recorded, by the House of Lords. Then the new force for which Parnell stood revealed itself. Nothing could have done more to strengthen the new Land League than this event. The League was instantly at work in every case that offered it a foothold. Rents were refused above the "valued rent" scale, any man who paid more was banned. Every farm where there had been an eviction became a centre of activity, and any man who took such a farm, or did anything for the landlord or the agent concerned, was banned. On 15th September 1880 Lord Mountmorres was murdered near Clonbar. A week later an agent—whose name came afterwards to stand for the campaign, Captain Boycott—was put under the ban. The police could get no information, and the banning of men was accompanied by the shooting of those who held on their way in spite of the League, by the maiming of cattle placed on evicted farms, and by all sorts of minor violences. Parnell and Biggar denounced all violent action, and the Parnell Commission, examining later all the evidence that was brought by Parnell's most convinced and determined opponents, had to conclude that these denunciations were not insincere.[1] The other current of agitation was operating, and the figures of cases of agrarian crime rose from 863 in 1879 to 2589 in 1880, although the acute agitation had not begun until September in the latter year; evictions rose from 6239 in 1879 to 10,457 in 1880. The figures of crime for separate months in 1880 show that from 67 in May the cases rose to 165 in September, 269 in October, 559 in November, and 865 in December. The crimes thus scheduled were

[1] Parnell Commissioners' Report, p. 76.

chiefly those of sending threatening letters, killing or maiming cattle, arson, firing into houses or at the person, and murder.[1]

In face of this onrush of events the first thought of the executive in Dublin was one of regret that the new Government had allowed the Coercion Act of the late Government to lapse. Lord Cowper, the Viceroy, and Mr Forster, the Chief Secretary, were insistent with the Cabinet to promise renewal of the Act, and all through the later months of the year were threatening resignation unless the Habeas Corpus Act were suspended. Meanwhile Lord Cowper was urging that the Land League should be treated as an illegal conspiracy and its leading members arrested. Mr Gladstone, who had already lost the Duke of Argyll from his Cabinet, and Lord Lansdowne from a minor place in his Government, over the Compensation Bill, and who knew that Lord Hartington had never liked it, was not disposed to see much reason at the moment to be at the pains of dissociating the Irish party from these disturbances. He announced at the Guildhall banquet on 9th November that the Government would stipulate that order must be restored in Ireland before grievances could be considered, returning thus to the old over-logical position that England cherished. A week earlier, with dramatic effect, the Government in Ireland had arrested five Irish members, Parnell, Biggar, Dillon, Sullivan and Sexton; and nine other Land Leaguers, including Patrick Egan and Brennan. So the year ended with the Government deeply into the first of its quagmires.

[1] These figures are taken from the Parnell Commissioners' Report;

CHAPTER III

1881: COMMON SENSE

IN reviewing the events of 1880 there was occasion to make allowance for a general depression. In 1881 it is possible to trace, as a prevailing influence, a tendency towards "common-sense" views, which may be the natural British reaction from a period of self-pity.

The return to sturdiness arose primarily from a revival of trade. The railways gave the first distinct note of the improvement, the half-yearly dividends declared in February being much better than had been anticipated. The favouring conditions recorded were "lowness of wages and prices coupled with a good steady trade."[1] Sheffield's exports to America had in the previous year risen to over a million pounds in value; and there seemed to be no serious prospect of strikes to disturb output. The year 1881 was, in fact, fairly free of such troubles. Strikes occurred in the month of June among the colliers in some districts, the blast-furnace men and the nail-makers; but, though 30,000 men were out in the last case, the only real menace came from the colliers; and as they were conferring on the extension to all districts of the sliding scale, already at work in the northern districts, Staffordshire and Yorkshire, there was no great alarm. The general confidence must have been well restored; for the early part of 1881 saw that large call for capital which the financial experts had been foretelling in 1880. In the first three months of 1881 about a hundred companies were floated, and the capital asked for was thirty-three and a quarter millions

[1] *The Times*, 8th February 1881.

sterling. Two millions of this were in Birmingham Corporation 3½ per cent. Stock; and the changed conditions since that corporation's last attempt [1] were sufficiently indicated by the subscription of the whole amount at an average of £98. 2s. 1d.[2] Over twelve millions were in railway issues of preference stock, bonds and debentures. But it is evident that the City believed the public to be in a mood now for more than solid disposal of savings, for the remaining nineteen millions were asked for in more speculative ventures. Still the timidity of the orthodox observer of the money market remained very great. *The Times*, for instance, considered that only about six millions of real capital were called for beyond the corporation and railway issues. The Stock Exchange was not as yet a normal field for middle-class savings, which were "as a rule invested as they are made in houses or land, new plant, increase of stocks, etc." [3] In accordance with this state of things we find the stock and share list of the chief daily papers at this time no more than a column long—a typical instance showing, besides home and foreign Government securities, twenty-four mining companies, twenty-six Colonial securities, eighteen industrial companies, twelve tram companies, five gas companies, three shipping companies, and one land company. Even this moderate compilation was not regarded as quite healthy. Seventeen gold-mining companies appeared among these early prospectuses of the year, and a month or two later *The Times* was commenting on the "inundation of gold-mining companies since 1879." [4] To modern eyes it hardly looks like an inundation: the total capital of all the companies amounted to only three millions, and of those floated in the year now under discussion only two asked for as

[1] *Cf.* p. 28.
[2] Bunce's *History of the Corporation of Birmingham*, ii: 34.
[3] *The Times*, 4th April 1881.
[4] Leading article, 5th May.

much as a quarter of a million; the majority were floated at from £50,000 to £80,000. It is curious and interesting to follow in these years all the effects of the shortage of gold, all the complicated projects for meeting the shortage, all the puny efforts to increase the supply, knowing, as we do now know, what an immense source was all the time awaiting exploitation in South Africa. Both from the political and the financial point of view it should be borne in mind, in reading of the events of the succeeding three years, that the British public as yet knew practically nothing of the mineral wealth of the Transvaal; and the world of high politics and high finance, some members of which must have had the information, did not believe in it. The public knew no more than the occasional rumours of a nugget having been found here and there—"a fine little nugget from the north side of the Tugela," or "undoubtedly payable gold in the Lydenburg district"—and the rumours were generally accompanied by a warning that opinion in Pretoria was very wild, and that there was nothing to warrant a gold "rush." In fact, similar rumours from the head waters of the River Yukon, in Alaska, were much more hopefully regarded. That ministers had more knowledge than this is certain; Sir Garnet Wolseley, the Administrator of the Transvaal, in a despatch to Sir Michael Hicks Beach on the question of annexation, at the end of 1879, had written: "The Transvaal is rich in minerals; gold has already been found in quantities, and there can be little doubt that larger and still more valuable goldfields will sooner or later be discovered." Yet this emphatic statement appears to have made no more impression on the Cabinet than the newspaper rumours had made on the public. Goschen, for example, laboured long at the Exchequer to devise solutions of the gold problem without any apparent expectation of relief from a new supply. Scientists worked at

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 26.

new methods of treating auriferous ores, which had been sent to them from South Africa—one of such methods, the use of hydrochloric acid, for refractory ores, was exhibited in London on 19th August 1881. But did even they know the significance of the task they had been set? At any rate, for the present no new supply was in contemplation; and the prevailing consciousness of the problem is sufficiently indicated by the meeting in Paris in May of this year of an international conference to deal with it. But as the bimetallic theory did not attain its full height in England until a year or two later we may leave that conference with the bare mention of its meeting. In this country the more active economic theory was of another kind. Early in May the question of the new French tariff became acute. Existing commercial treaties with France had determined by lapse of time; and the new proposals of that country showed a considerable, and even grave, enhancement of import duties. The cotton and woollen trades were the most seriously disturbed, the previous taxes on their products having been 20 per cent. *ad valorem*, and the new taxes being 44 per cent. The Protectionist party, numbering still many of the surviving opponents of Repeal, was not slow to take this opportunity. By the month of September the Fair Trade League was in existence, with a programme singularly like a famous programme of twenty-two years later. It opened its campaign with emphasis on "retaliation" against high duties in other countries; and, again as happened later, the idea of enabling these detached islands to take as downright a line as countries with large and varied resources by the formation of an Imperial Bund was early affixed to the programme, and in the end became more prominent than the original idea. The movement attracted the politically roving spirit of Lord Randolph Churchill; and on 18th September he was laying before an audience at Oldham the desirability of taxing all foreign manu-

factured goods to relieve the burdens on land, and dilating on "the antagonism set up by the Liberal party between manufacturing and agricultural interests." In November he was even so near the later spirit as to be expending his sarcasm on "the commercial edifice constructed by the immortal Cobden and the divine Bright." In October the movement was being presented less aristocratically to the working man, a meeting at Sheffield passing a resolution to deplore "the failure of the present system of free trade so called . . . endangering the steady employment, the fair wages, and the future well-being of our working classes."

However, such trade problems as there were in this year did not disturb the general sense of restored comfort. The great middle class, convinced of its mission as the repository of "progress," had enough to engross it. Electricity was the new god of progress, and it continued its advances. Among public buildings two more railway stations, Charing Cross and Liverpool Street, installed the new light in January; the General Post Office began using it in the same month; in June the Prudential Assurance Company had nine lights of 150 c.p. in its offices; and the House of Commons first did its work under electric light. Among great private houses Trentham was fitted with the light in November. But the novelty in this year was the application of the invention to street lighting. Bristol appears to have been the first town to make the experiment, which it did in some of its principal thoroughfares in January; and Brighton followed with an installation on the sea-front in February. Liverpool set up sixty lamps over two and a half miles of its streets in April. London, more able to command the rivalry of inventors, offered the lighting of the City to be divided between three companies for an experimental period of twelve months, with a view to selecting one of them at the end of the period. Great interest was taken, even from the artistic

point of view of " seeing London in a new light," though a sarcastic person wrote to the Press to remark that the City was the worst part of London for the experiment, since 685,000 of its 800,000 inhabitants were not there at night, and only " the cats and the caretakers " would enjoy the fun. For the first time the gas companies took alarm ; they had somewhat unwisely raised their charges at the beginning of the year, and the best comfort that could be offered them was that there was still a great future for gas as a heating and power agent. Their panic subsided later owing to an unexpected slowness of pace in the development of the new illuminant. Meanwhile one of the most useful applications of electricity was in its extreme infancy. In May Mr Alexander Siemens was lecturing at the Society of Arts on the transmission of vehicles by electric power. The system he lectured upon was the use of a positive and a negative rail, replacing the customary tram-rails : after consideration, Mr Siemens told his audience, the authorities had decided to class the vehicle as a tramcar. But this was obviously too dangerous a method to last ; " live " rails would be impossible on the road surface. For several years yet invention failed at this problem. An " electric railway " was opened at the Crystal Palace in April, and towards the end of the year an electric tram was running on the Giant's Causeway and Portrush line ; but both these were worked with live rails. The latter, however, must have stimulated the inventors, for it was announced that it could be worked at a cost of a penny a mile, whereas the steam-trams, to which, in spite of their noisiness and dirt, corporations in large centres of population were finding themselves forced to consent, cost from 1s. to 1s. 9d. a mile. It may be added here that the general advances in electrical invention were summed up in an Electrical Exhibition opened in Paris in September of this year. Beyond its more common uses the delicate developments of electricity were attracting

the medical profession. An "induction balance" had been used in the case of President Garfield in August to locate the bullet that had been fired at him; and at the end of the year experiments were made with a needle fitted with a kind of telephone attachment fixed to the surgeon's ear, which might, it was hoped, supersede the old probe.

The particular medical interest of the year, however, so far as general knowledge went, was the new theory of bacteria. The researches of Pasteur had for some time been closely watched from England; and although, as we shall have occasion to see later, it was chiefly the immediate and palpable cause of his researches, the treatment of hydrophobia, which interested the public mind, yet incidentally the more profound results were known even to the newspapers. In February telegrams from Paris stated that in investigating a case of hydrophobia Pasteur had found "a small organism or microbe," and the question had been raised whether this was a new form of disease, or whether rabies was caused by a microscopic organism. The ensuing months saw much discussion,[1] the existence of these small organisms being admitted, but one school of medical thought maintaining a theory of "spontaneous generation," and holding that if water were put into a bottle living organisms would be "evolved" by putrefaction, but were not themselves the putrefaction.

Again, the idea of progress was at the root of all the interest taken in ballooning at this time. Some of it, indeed, was merely a matter of fashion. The gatherings at Hurlingham and Ranelagh nowadays to see the start of balloon races had their origin in 1881 in a garden-party given by the new Balloon Society at Lillie Bridge; the company was content with the spectacle of a single balloon, and its passengers made the report that London, owing to the people in the streets being indistinguishable, looked like a city of the dead. On 1st June two Guardsmen

[1] See, for instance, *The Times*, 18th March and 9th August 1881.

went to the Derby by balloon, starting from the Crystal Palace and landing at Epsom, in a field a quarter of a mile from the grand stand. But the real impetus of the balloon craze of these years was the serious middle-class enthusiasm. It was most ingeniously enlisted. A scheme would be propounded for reaching the Pole by triple balloons "lashed together for mutual aid," and launched on a "wind-curve" calculated to carry them in eighteen hours from a ship's chosen winter-quarters to the Pole. There would be devices for using balloons for army signalling; for sending them up in fogs to explode dynamite and blow off the vapours; for employing them to illuminate large surfaces with electric light.

It is all rather solemn; and indeed the middle-class of England, conscious of itself as a class for some time now, had not yet been penetrated by self-consciousness in the subtler sense. Sport and the worship of exercise never filled more than a couple of columns of the daily papers; there were considerable intervals between race meetings; the word "polo" was printed in inverted commas; there was no golf; football was still open to antagonism, for the Mayor of Southampton issued in September 1880 an appeal to the heads of families and schools to prevent the game of football "being played according to Rugby Union, Association, and other rules of a dangerous character," and the winter of 1881 brought another outcry, accompanied with specimen lists of casualties. The appearance of cycling in the sporting columns marks the first approach of a new era. Yet however distinctly we may see the middle-class as still ponderous and solid, it is no less a shock to come upon a perfectly grave notice in *The Times*[1] to this effect: "Fashion seems to have decreed that photographic albums are in future to be ornamented on each page. We have the 'Mikado' album with Japanese scenes, the 'Language

[1] 4th February 1881.

of Flowers,' and the ' Picturesque ' with copies of etchings of quaint and pretty places." We are indeed in the days yet of albums ; and it was not a hopelessly old-fashioned member of the aristocracy who had presented to the Princess Frederica of Hanover at her wedding " a plush table."

The most depressing circumstance, however, was not the impenetrability of the middle-class, but the fact that when penetrated, as on some matters of taste it was beginning to be, by new ideas, it sucked them up in a thoroughly wrong-headed way. The laying of the foundation stone of the City and Guilds of London Institute at South Kensington was accompanied by the reflection that the time of shoddy and bad work was over. " Think," wrote the impassioned leader-writer, " what a museum of horrors a furniture shop was before 1851. That was the beginning of our renaissance." And a month or two earlier we find *papier-maché* imitations of stamped leather seriously commended by the same newspaper as a form of decorative art. The death of Decimus Burton in December of this year called forth genuine and not ill-balanced appreciations of his architectural work in London—the Athenæum Clubhouse, the Hyde Park Corner screen, and the Constitution Hill Arch—yet at the same time the beautiful and dignified old building in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which our own generation rejoices to have seen saved from demolition, was described as " that large, dull, heavy-looking mansion, Newcastle House." A still more deplorable tendency is seen in a sarcastic leading article of this year on the conference of master builders, in which the builders are implored to consider " the pitiful elevation of the lengthy roads from the market gardens of Tyburnia or South Kensington " and to reflect " how very far its monotonous doors and windows fall short of the ideal street in which each dwelling shall look as if it could stand by itself with a character of its own." So lamentably was

the middle class taking at a gulp its own interpretation of what "artistic" meant, and longing to translate the genuine town architecture of London—the not unworthy attempt to treat the street, rather than the house, as the essential consideration in massed centres of population—into prettiness and picturesqueness. This was the year which saw the formation of the Bedford Park Company in July, with a capital of £125,000, to develop that estate.

The most forceful influences in matters of taste at this time—influences destined in the end to spread through every social level—had turned their backs upon the middle class. One voice that had long raised itself against that class in this year fell silent. In February Thomas Carlyle died: the world lost in him not only a writer of history, but even more a prophet of the social conscience, a man of genius to whom the masses of the people were real. A teacher yet with years of life before him who had in no small measure reached his democratic feeling by way of revolt against the lack of a sense of responsibility, the lack of light, in the middle classes, was John Ruskin; he was by now addressing himself almost entirely to the working man. Matthew Arnold, starting from yet a third position, was reaching the same end, and in carrying his gospel of the humaneness of education to the working men's colleges he was taking part in the new movement. We are at the period of conjunction between art and socialism, of which William Morris is the typical exponent. In May 1881 various Radical clubs of working men in London combined, forming the Democratic Federation: and, although the working man's circumstances in the ensuing years would in any case have endued such an organisation with power, it is none the less true that the presence in the movement of such men as Morris made it more formidable. He had a voice that was unwearying and was listened to. No one has expressed more tersely

than he the theory that was behind the alliance of art with socialism. "I know," he said, referring to a recent demonstration by working men, "what these men want: employment which would foster their self-respect, and win the praise and sympathy of their fellows, and dwellings which they could come to with pleasure, surroundings which would soothe and elevate them; reasonable labour, reasonable rest. There is only one thing that can give them this—Art."[1] The self-respect of the workman coming from labour that was reasonable was the heart of Morris's social creed; and it had this soundness—that he had come to it not from a theoretical consideration of the workman, but from his own experience in dealing with the world. He wanted to have, and to make for other people, beautiful things. He was roused to fury, not by blank impenetrability on the part of the middle class, but by the quality of its susceptibility. It allowed itself to be told that many of its surroundings were ugly, and it substituted for them others of a different taste with exactly the same superficial attention. In his own work as a craftsman he was "confronted everywhere with the double barrier of material that would not take good colour, and colour which in its own substance was uniformly bad."[2] Worst of all, he saw his gospel running to waste among people who bought things made in that inadequate way and were satisfied with them. It was to his mind the same spirit that showed itself in lack of regulation of employment; in the blundering semi-charitable movement for workmen's dwellings; in such groping efforts on the workman's behalf as the Coffee-house movement, now very active.

In this spirit art as the gospel of genuineness, of reasonableness and of reality was being preached to the workman. In 1881 the first Whitechapel art show was held in a school-

[1] Speech delivered at Burslem, 13th October 1881.

[2] Mackail's *Life of William Morris*, i. 311.

room, with pictures by Leighton, Watts, Burne-Jones and Walter Crane, and an exhibition of pottery and embroideries. More directly the building of the City and Guilds of London Institute was heralding a fresh era in industrial art; the new Natural History Museum, opened on Easter Monday in this year, began to put order into the educational chaos of South Kensington; and the Ruskin Museum at Sheffield was far advanced. The opening of the University College at Nottingham on 28th June led to a gratified survey of an educational movement which, beginning with the University of London, had expanded to the Queen's Colleges of Ireland, the University of Durham, with its offshoot in the Science College at Newcastle, the Victoria University, the Science College at Leeds, Mason College at Birmingham, and the most recent university colleges of Liverpool and Nottingham. The vigour of educational interest in the provinces was matter for comment. The School Boards were making progress towards secondary education, and, though the teaching of domestic economy had as yet but limited support, the movement for including in the code such subjects as cooking, heating and ventilation had come into existence.

We may see the effect of the year's access of commonsense in the state of ecclesiastical controversy. Mr Dale was transferred from the conspicuousness of his city church to a country living; and early in the year an attempt was made, by means of a memorial to the Archbishop of Canterbury, to set up a policy of "live and let live." The memorial pleaded for "recognised toleration of even wide diversities of ceremonial," and also petitioned that the courts for ecclesiastical causes should be "such as to secure the conscientious obedience of clergymen who believe the constitution of the Church of Christ to be of divine appointment." The memorial was signed by five deans: Dr Church of St Paul's, Dr Lake of Durham, Dr Cowie of Manchester, Lord Alwyne Compton of Worcester, and Dr

Purey Cust of York; by several archdeacons; and among the canonry by Gregory, Liddon and Stubbs of St Paul's, and Dr King of Christ Church. What, again, could be more sensible than the comment made upon that notoriety which the attacks of street roughs were bringing upon the Salvation Army? The disturbances had produced a question in Parliament, to which Sir William Harcourt, as Home Secretary, had replied that, if the Salvation Army complained of attacks, it was fair to remind the Army that its methods were somewhat provocative. The comment made on this was that such a doctrine might easily go too far. "We need not assist the roughs to put the Salvation Army down. Another course lies before us all. It is to do the Army's work in a better way."[1] These disturbances became more deliberate and more organised later on; but they are mentioned here because, although the Army had been in existence since 1865, this year was the first in which it attracted widespread attention.

Even the world of fashion seems to show us in 1881 the working of common-sense. It is a small but not quite insignificant fact that "Evans's" this year ceased to be even a name. It had previously come to the end of its too lingering career as the only survival of the "night houses" of the sixties; and now the last familiar name of that rowdy high life of Lord Hastings and his friends disappeared, and the place became the Falstaff Club. An event, however, of more importance is the indication that the great world was changing its habits in regard to the old-fashioned London season. The idea was being mooted that the time had come to be done with the old sharp distinction between "the season" and "out of season." The modern comfort of railway travelling—dining cars, for instance, had appeared this year on the Great Northern and Midland railways—was making it unnecessary, and

[1] *The Times*, 13th October 1881.

indeed almost silly, to keep up a fashion due to a time when the journey to London of a great household was too large an affair to be undertaken more than once a year.[1] Common-sense seemed too to be colouring very strongly the relation of great families to their territories. Rents had had to be reduced on account of the combination of general agricultural depression with particularly bad harvests; and while on the one hand this led to a perverse and peevish kind of common-sense in the deliberate turning of some large tracts into rabbit warrens,[2] it led also to a new hardheadedness in the forwarding of agricultural associations to make experiments in crops, fertilisers and soils. Rectors complained that their glebe could find no tenants; yet land could hardly have been valueless when a farm of 190 acres in Sussex fetched £7200, and 103 acres of marsh pastureland fetched £7500. It is significant also of a new feeling in society that the sale of game by great landlords was taken quite calmly. Preserving was already a business.

The season of 1881 was again chronicled as one devoid of notable interest. It had its "lion," of the kind usual in those days, in the shape of the King of the Sandwich Islands, who came to Claridge's in July, and was at all the parties in London and elsewhere for a month. A "lion" more interesting to us now was Ivan Turgenieff, who came, as was fitting for the writer of *A Sportsman's Sketches*, in the autumn, and was shooting partridges in Cambridgeshire in October. The season had its mild sensation in the marriage of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts in February to an American; and it is a coincidence that one of the marks of the season was a new impulse of friendliness between this country and the United States. The lingering soreness of the Alabama claims was dispelled by the

[1] *The Times*, 30th July 1880.

[2] *Cf.* the case of a large estate of a thousand acres in Hampshire: *The Times*, 23rd July 1881.

feelings of sympathy aroused by the assassination of President Garfield. New York became once more a subject of interest free of afterthoughts, and the British public read this year of the "costly house" of Mr Vanderbilt, which had absorbed only the sum, petty to a millionaire of these days, of £300,000; and of the advance of high buildings, which now sound equally petty; houses were being put up actually of seven or nine storeys high, and the New York correspondents prophesied that in a few years the streets would "tower to the height of ten or eleven storeys."

Early in the year the season had been overcast by two events. In March the papers began to contain intimations of Beaconsfield's failure of health. On 19th April he died; and modern generations, to whom his domination appears to have been absolute, will find the leading articles at the time of his death singularly reserved, and not obscurely tinged by a mistrust that he never surmounted. Perhaps the reason was that, as an old man, he had relapsed into those characteristics of the alien—the avowed alien—which were partly racial and partly the Dæmon of his genius. That strange figure, with the dyed hair, the sunken, smouldering eyes and parchment cheeks, which only broke its silence at London dinner-tables to launch some levin of an epigram, must have reminded the great world that, after all, the new spirit of Imperialism, the new regime in India, and almost all such power as the Tories had of appealing to the working man, were the achievement of an individual whom people yet alive could remember in a fringed waistcoat and green velvet trousers, affronting in person and manner every canon of their tastes. Perhaps, too, in the later years of his power the absorption of English energies in foreign affairs, the apprehension that it raised of entanglement in European disputes, had savoured of a cosmopolitanism not English in the great man, a quality, it may be, which

his eminence had kept out of sight, until age brought back the ineradicable trait of his race. At any rate the strangeness of him sounded its note at the end as at the beginning; at the sale of his effects three months after his death people crowded the house in Curzon Street to stare at the bedroom walls hung with blue silk embroidered with roses in bloom, the crimson satin damask dining-room, the brocades of the drawing-room. Even in the formal tributes of the Press the strangeness is more commented on than anything else: "His secret lay perhaps," *The Times* wrote, "in the magnetic influence of a dauntless will, in his unrivalled power of patience, in his impenetrable reserve and detachment." "Magnetic" and "impenetrable" were curious epitaphs for a Prime Minister of England.

The other shadow on the year was one which afterwards became so heavy that it is somewhat difficult to recall the spirit in which it was first met. On 28th February the telegrams announcing the British defeat on Majuba Hill were published in London. Bitter as the news was, prompt as the outcry was in some sections of the community, yet the country did not as a whole forget how ready it had been in the previous year to accede to the Boer demand for the withdrawal of the annexation. On the whole it was conscious that it had slipped into this disaster by something approaching carelessness. True, the outbreak of hostile operations by the Boers had at the beginning of the year somewhat dimmed that consciousness; and there were not lacking signs of a very different kind when, on Lord Roberts's departure to take command in South Africa, ladies strewed his path from his carriage to the train with flowers. But prevailing influences were in the main for the steadying of opinion. It was affected partly by the old spirit towards Colonial responsibilities—the pre-Disraelian spirit "There are," *The Times* wrote, "some thirty-five millions of people in these islands. . . . Can it be said that any one of these is benefited by the sacrifices that all

have made on behalf of South Africa? We cannot but be proud of the heroism displayed by Englishmen at Rorke's Drift, or at Ulundi, but can we honestly say that a quarrel with Cetewayo or the Boers of the Transvaal is one in which it is worth while for a single Englishman to shed his blood? . . . Are we indeed the weaker or the stronger, the richer or the poorer, the happier or the reverse, for our vast Colonial possessions?"[1] Of course after Majuba, opinion underwent modification. But the attitude even then was not one of reasserting annexation, but only of insisting on a considerable measure of control of the Transvaal's affairs. The doctrine of suzerainty, appearing in answer to this demand, was but coldly received. The word, it was felt, was virtually invented for the occasion, and had no real meaning. "To style the Queen suzerain is not to specify her relations to the feudatory republic."[2] What was required was "a practical reconciliation, which to some persons seems at present impossible, between the liberty of a population of sequestered farmers to select their own magistrates and determine their own taxation, and their privation of right to irritate the sea of native life on their borders into periodical storms and tempests of war."[3] Most important of all is it to realise that the Government's announced policy of not pursuing the war, and of meeting the Boers to decide the status of the Transvaal, had strong support. The idea was placed beside the withdrawal from Candahar, which had taken place quietly early in this year, as the most sensible course to pursue. In the month of June Mr Chamberlain, speaking at Birmingham, exposed some of the errors of the preceding months. Even to the beginning of December 1880, in spite of all that had become publicly known about the Boer hatred of annexation, Sir Owen Lanyon, the Administrator, was still telling

[1] *The Times*, 6th January 1881.
[2] Ditto, 8th March 1881.
[3] Ditto, 5th April 1881.

the Government that three-quarters of the Boer population had ceased to care about it. After the insurrection had broken out there were more blunders. Mr Kruger had spoken of submitting the question to a Royal Commission, and Sir George Colley had been instructed to arrange a settlement on the first condition that the Boers must lay down their arms. "While the correspondence was going on," said Mr Chamberlain, "and in the midst of the negotiations, the British troops unfortunately on three several occasions marching in inferior numbers to attack the strong position of the Boers met with a repulse." In the midst of rumours, disquieting and reassuring, as to the progress in South Africa of the commission which had been appointed to arrange the terms of settlement, the persistent story of error was recalled. "We know now that we were wrong, that the annexation was unpopular from the first, and that the injudicious way in which it was carried out only served to fan the smouldering discontent. It is not the fact that they have defeated us that has opened our eyes, for that taken by itself would rather have tended to keep them closed, but the fact that they have satisfied us of the substantial justice of their case. . . . Nor is it possible to acquit the present Government for declining to do a year ago what it had subsequently admitted the justice and necessity of doing. . . . We were misinformed and misled from the outset."[1] There was a genuine wish that the settlement now should not be hedged about by conditions that could only lead to spite and irritation. Nothing, in fact, it was thought, could be better than to have done with the whole matter, and the news that the Convention was signed was received with relief. "England can now have no desire to intrude herself upon the Transvaal. The more completely its people can get on without interference of any kind the better pleased we shall be. . . . The fact is that between

[1] *The Times*, 12th July 1881.

England and the Transvaal there is no natural connection whatever."[1] "I am sure," Mr Gladstone said, speaking at the Mansion House two or three days after the signature, "that there are no rival interests between us and the Boers." Lord Salisbury, who had been elected at a meeting at Lord Abergavenny's house on 10th May to succeed Lord Beaconsfield as leader of the Tory peers, might make speeches about the loyal minority in the Transvaal, and say that everything in South Africa would now happen "under the shadow of Majuba Hill"; but the question practically dropped out of English political life for some years.

Indeed only with difficulty could it have continued to occupy a place. Parliament had found itself reduced to a lamentable barrenness. After the turn that events had taken in Ireland, men knew what to expect in England; and before Parliament met there was much discussion about the forms of closure of debate (the idea was still so new that the word for it retained its French form—*clôture*)[2] in operation in the parliaments of other countries. The blow struck by the executive in the arrests of Parnell, Biggar and others in November 1880 was mistimed; the accused were brought for trial in January, and on the disagreement of the jury were all discharged. Lord Cowper and Mr Forster, backed by Lord Hartington, had never relaxed their demand for renewal of the Coercion Act; and they could now bring to bear on the Cabinet discussions the effect of this futile trial. Yet it was not believed that the Government would agree; they were supposed to be too much under the control of the Radical wing. "Mr Chamberlain and Mr Bright will not vindicate the law; they will dismember the Empire, and Mr Gladstone and the rest will consent to register their decrees."[3]

[1] *The Times*, 5th August 1881.

[2] It was Matthew Arnold who first pointed out that the English language contained the word "closure," which quite met the need.

[3] *Quarterly Review*, January 1881.

That view was mistaken. The Queen's speech at the opening of Parliament hinted at suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; and almost immediately Mr Forster introduced a Coercion Bill, giving power to arrest suspected persons and keep them in prison for any period up to 30th September 1882. Irish obstruction met this at once in such force that the first stage, the leave of the House to introduce the Bill, was only attained by a course of action which remains one of the historic incidents of Parliament. When the debate had lasted several days the Speaker cut across all forms of procedure by putting the question on his own responsibility. The House was taken by surprise, and the debate was ended. The Crimes Act became law in March, and the old attitude towards Ireland was in full sway in Mr Gladstone's idea of producing, concurrently with the Coercion measure, a Land measure, establishing the "Three F's"—fair rent, fixity of tenure, and freedom of sale. The Bessborough Commission had just reported in favour of such legislation; but it was unfortunate that it had not reported a year earlier. In 1880 the Bill might have changed the face of the Irish situation; in 1881 it was doggedly wrangled over by Irishmen infuriated by the revival of coercion, Conservatives displeased with any land legislation, and Liberals sore and angry at the conditions which had driven them into coercion. Moreover, the moment the Land Act was passed it was cleverly taken over by the Land League. Instead of weakening that body it strengthened it. Parnell contrived that no one should apply to the Land Court without consulting, and obtaining the consent of, the local branch of the League.

These two measures, and bewildered discussions of the paralysis of debate and the forms of procedure in the face of obstruction, occupied almost the whole of a very long session. The Judicature Act, taking the opportunity of the approaching transfer of the Law Courts from West-

minster to their new site at Temple Bar, made changes in the organisation of legal administration; and the Chief Baron, the Serjeants at Law, and other dignitaries were abolished. The Bankruptcy Act did away with old methods of liquidation, which had led to much corrupt bargaining with creditors and to fraudulent arrangements; and provided for the establishment of a new Bankruptcy Court, for public examination of debtors, and an audit of accounts in liquidation.

The place Ireland had been taking during the session was not in the least out of proportion to the urgency and gravity of the Irish problem. Already the Land League was achieving the end set before it by Irish newspapers, notably *The Irish World* and *The Irishman*, which had been fond of saying that Ireland could not hope to beat England in battle, but she might render the work of government "nervous and distracted."[1] The House of Commons had cheered the announcement early in February that Michael Davitt had been arrested on his unexpired ticket-of-leave; but those who cheered expected a counterstroke in the shape of dynamite, and the precautions adopted are exemplified in the care taken when a heavy parcel addressed to Sir William Harcourt was delivered at the Home Office. Removed by the police and opened by them it was found to contain an old pistol. Davitt's arrest itself was a sign of the confusion of thought that had set in. He had been the first and the most energetic in the condemnation of the violence that broke out in 1880[2]; but his name stood in the popular mind for Fenianism, and Government followed the popular mind. For some months no other spectacular step was taken. But agrarian crime in Ireland was making another great increase; the figures for 1880 were 2590; for 1881 they were 4439. Boycotting was rife, with its accompaniments of shooting,

[1] *Cf.* Parnell Commissioners' Report, p. 70.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

cattle-maiming, and murder. For a while the Government hesitated on the subject of the Land League. Their law officers had given opinions on its vulnerability as a conspiracy; but there were other considerations summed up in a letter of Lord Cowper's to the Cabinet. "If," he wrote, "the restraining influences of the central body were withdrawn, and the local branches driven to become secret societies, crime, particularly assassination, might increase, for though the central body gives unity and strength to the movement it does to a certain extent restrain crime."[1] This is very close to what Parnell himself had said in a speech at New Ross, co. Wexford, in September 1880, when he took the line that violence was a corollary of lack of organisation, and that if the Land League were completely organised no man would dare abuse his rights as a landlord.[2] But the Government could see only one step to take. In October 1881 it suppressed the Land League, and under the Crimes Act lodged Parnell, Sexton, O'Kelly, O'Brien and Dr Kenny in Kilmainham gaol. The Land League, its responsible heads removed, transferred its headquarters, under Patrick Egan, to Paris, and left in Ireland the Ladies' Land League, which had been founded, in February 1881, under the command of Miss Anna Parnell. Mr Forster had had his way, and one incident of this autumn must have gratified him. Parnell, against the advice of Dillon, issued from Kilmainham the "No Rent" manifesto, urging tenants to refuse all rent until constitutional rights were restored. But the priests were against this open defiance of law, and the manifesto "fell absolutely flat."[3] The arrests may therefore have seemed for the moment to be a successful move. Yet Mr Gladstone admitted in after years that the policy of the Government had been a mistake; and John Bright confessed that

[1] Quoted in Barry O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 287.
[2] Parnell Commissioners' Report, p. 88.
[3] Barry O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 320.

the mistake was due to a misapprehension of the forces of the Land League.[1]

The brewing of another storm was at present unnoticed by the British public. In August rumours began to reach England of disaffection among the native troops of Egypt. These rumours were denied by the Khedive; and even when, a month later, circumstantial reports followed of an *émeute* in Cairo, in which the palace had been surrounded by troops and guns, and demands had been made on the army's behalf by one whose name was given as "Achmet el Ourabi," the ordinary Englishman was not much stirred. He knew only vaguely of Egypt as a country whose ruler by extravagant expenditure and reckless borrowing had run his nation into hopeless debt, and had had to submit to the appointment of a joint French and English control, which worked badly owing to mutual jealousies. He saw these jealousies breaking out now, French newspapers suggesting that the military rising was in some way engineered by England as a step towards intervention, English newspapers suggesting, when (in exercise of her supremacy) Turkey sent commissioners to investigate the outbreak, that this was some Machiavellian stroke of Bismarck's, and that there might be worse things than anarchy in Egypt. The year ended with the Turkish commissioners, whose arrival had caused immense excitement in Cairo, going peaceably to dinner-parties, but doing little else; and with an interview in which Arabi, now arrived at the familiar spelling, protested to Sir William Gregory his loyalty to the Sultan, his faithfulness to religion, his sole desire to improve the conditions and efficiency of the Egyptian army, and his lack of any intention to undermine the joint control.

[1] Barry O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 331; ii. 360.

CHAPTER IV

1882: IRELAND, EGYPT—AND JUMBO

THE Liberal Government of 1880-1885 was itself conscious of carrying certain handicaps. The worship of Mr Gladstone, useful though it may have been in holding the party together, was apt to become a dead weight when problems arose in which he took but a perfunctory interest. Mistrust of Mr Chamberlain caused such members of the Cabinet as Lord Hartington and Lord Granville to feel uncomfortable and uncertain in their work. In Parliament the Irish disaffection and the harassing activity of the "Fourth Party" incessantly hampered the progress of public business. But there was a heavier handicap than any of these. The forces of idealism in the national life—the forces making for reconsideration of social duties, for readjustment of social conceptions—were to a very large extent divorced from politics and political creeds. They had been drained off along several channels. There was the Socialist view, that Parliament was in the hands of the professional and manufacturing middle class, and worked solely from the standpoint of that class. There was the view of the ardent social reformer, who, though he may be said actually to date from a famous piece of Parliamentary action—the Factory Acts—had grown impatient, and preferred almost any nostrum to the hope of reforming legislation. There was the somewhat chilly ethical enthusiasm, born of the new religion of science, which held that sanitary inspection could cure more evils than the most drastic Act of Parliament. There was the

Christian zeal, whether of the type of Charles Kingsley or of Father Dolling, which, seeing with new eyes the terrible state of its vineyard, called aloud for labour that would never have time to look beyond the immediate day's work. All this diversion of idealism the Government did not number among its handicaps; yet it was certainly the heaviest. The bad effect was twofold. On the one hand social problems accumulated such a force of highly educated opinion that they became exasperatingly thorny to handle; and on the other hand much of the Radical strength in the country was sapped by the easy habit of looking on, detached from the necessity of distinguishing between right and wrong, so long as one Government was as good or as bad as another. So far the Government had displayed no capacity for drawing to itself the vitality of all that independent enthusiasm.

At the beginning of 1882 it nearly achieved, however, a great clearing of its path. Mr Gladstone never showed more brilliant political instinct than in the masterly conception of a stroke of Irish policy by which he could sweep influences, apparently hostile at the time and weakening to his power, into a single whole-hearted purpose. Within the Cabinet his own disappointment at having been obliged to revive coercion coincided in some measure with the Radical feeling of Mr Chamberlain. Coercion was also, for very different reasons, the especial object at the moment of the attacks of the "Fourth Party" in the House. Mr W. H. Smith was hinting at the possibility of a Conservative scheme of land purchase for Ireland; and Lord Hartington was in a mood which he expressed thus to Lord Granville: "It seems to me that an effort ought to be made to unite the two great parties on an Irish policy. . . . Though we go on talking about local government, and about the county franchise and redistribution of seats, and though Chamberlain thinks that we are on the eve of great political changes, I do not believe that one of them

will be made while the Irish difficulty lasts." [1] All these influences were at sixes and sevens. Hartington's union of the two parties would have been rather repressive than otherwise, so the idea had no reality; Smith was only making the kind of remark which is safe and comforting out of office; the "Fourth Party" was merely scoring debating points about the inconsistency and failure of Ministerial professions. But, whatever the separate intentions, they all expressed one opinion—that the present situation of the Irish question was hopeless. The day-to-day method of meeting it had produced such a tangle that it was time to attempt a wider and longer view, if Government was to escape suffocation. Mr Gladstone's brilliance lay in seeing that these very different lines of criticism made a kind of current on which he might set floating a policy of genuine advance in Ireland: and it fell out that an opportunity was not unwelcome to the Irish leaders. Parnell in gaol was feeling that the direction of events in Ireland was in danger of slipping from his hands. The co-operation between the extremist section and the Parliamentary party was his work, and nobody but he could manage it; his silence, his refusal to be "drawn" either by the extremists or by his own party, his capacity for locking up the precise threads of co-operation in his single mind, and keeping that mind impenetrable, were the only conditions on which the co-operation could be safely worked. In gaol he was out of touch, and was growing nervous. He mistrusted the Ladies' Land League and lived in dread of the party's being publicly and irredeemably associated with Fenianism. He was therefore in a mood not to hold off from the intimations which presently reached him of Mr Gladstone's desire to make a fresh start. Intimations had previously reached Mr Gladstone of Parnell's state of mind.[2] These exchanges (never acknowledged as such by

[1] Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, i. 344.

[2] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 64.

either of the two men) took place in April 1882; and to Parnell they must have been strengthened by the fact that the Arrears of Rent Bill, introduced originally by an Irish member, Mr Redmond, to supplement and ameliorate the Land Act of 1881, had been taken up by the Government, and passed into law on 18th April. It provided that, in cases in which the tenant could satisfy the legal tribunal of his inability to pay the whole of his arrears of rent, he should be called upon to pay the rent for 1881, but only half the arrears of preceding years, the State paying the other half. Mr Gladstone, as his nature was, having seen a piece of rectification to perform, moved very rapidly in his opinions. There is a famous letter of his to Mr Forster, dated in this month (it became famous later in the discussion of whether the trend of his mind towards Home Rule could have been foreseen by his party), in which he showed this rapidity very clearly. He asserted that, until there were seriously responsible bodies in Ireland, every plan framed by the Government came as an English plan, and was as such condemned, and that there must therefore be some form of local self-government. This was the passage afterwards most canvassed; but the passage most to our immediate purpose, as showing how far Mr Gladstone had moved, was this: "If we say we must postpone the question till the state of the country is more fit for it, I should answer that the least danger is in going forward at once. It is liberty alone which fits men for liberty. This proposition, like every other in politics, has its bounds; but it is far safer than the counter-doctrine, wait till they are fit."[1] This was a fairly swift change in eighteen months from the position he had taken at the Guildhall Banquet on 9th November 1880, that order must be restored before grievances could be considered.

As Gladstone and Parnell never admitted the exchange

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 58.

of preliminary intimations in April 1882, so neither of them would ever admit the implication contained in the words "The Kilmainham Treaty." But when Parnell and the others were released from gaol, on 2nd May, it was fairly well understood that, if the Government would continue to consider sympathetically the difficulties of the Irish tenant, there would be a diminution of agrarian crime. Parnell's side of the bargain was variously stated. The fact probably was that he merely meant to prove the truth of what he had said in 1880, that violence was really lack of organisation, and that the Land League, if he were free to control it, would neither murder men nor maim cattle. Though on the release of the prisoners Lord Cowper resigned the Viceroyalty, and Mr Forster the Chief Secretaryship, the Cabinet on the whole was with Mr Gladstone, even Lord Hartington holding the opinion that enough had been done to reassert the law, and that no danger was involved in the release.[1] A new hopefulness pervaded the political atmosphere. Lord Spencer succeeded to the Viceroyalty and Lord Frederick Cavendish undertook the Chief Secretaryship.

Before a week had passed, the Phœnix Park murders took place. Lord Frederick Cavendish was walking with Mr Burke, the Under Secretary, across the park on 6th May, after a long consultation with Lord Spencer at the castle, when they were set upon and stabbed to death. "It has been said," Lord Morley writes, "that the nineteenth century had seen the course of its history twenty-five times diverted by actual or attempted crime. In that sinister list the murders in the Phœnix Park have a tragic place."[2] For one horrified moment every eye turned to Parnell; but there could be no mistaking his innocence. He bore too obviously the marks of having received from the crime a blow which seemed to him nothing less than

[1] Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, i. 353.
[2] *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 68.

fatal; prostrated and despairing he called on Mr Gladstone on the morning after the murders to tell him that he felt unable to do any more for Ireland; he was with real difficulty restrained from resigning his seat. That first horror relieved, there emerged from the inevitably renewed conflict of political views a dignity of spirit which forbade any bandying to and fro of the tragedy. Whether in the bearing of those whose personal loss was cruel or of those whose political work was for the time ruined, whether in the language of the Press or of the House of Commons, there was no reckless accusation, no bitterness of recrimination. Years afterwards it could even be written that "the crime cleared the air like a disastrous storm, and made possible the beginning of better relations between the English and Irish."[1] That is not true of the state of feeling at the moment. The murders did certainly produce a softening, even a wonderful softening, of hearts, in which no wild words were permitted; but English feeling returned at once to its fixed point. On 11th May Sir William Harcourt introduced a new Crimes Bill, and Ireland was put back under coercion and abnormal processes of law for the detection of the murderers. Irish members fought the Bill, even with violence in the House, but it was quickly passed. Indeed, the condition of Ireland seemed to justify the most stern Tory view. Parnell's worst fears of what might happen while he was in prison were realised. He had lost control, and for the time being was too bitterly stricken to attempt to regain it. The Land League without his guidance plunged helplessly. The Invincibles, a Fenian organisation which hardly affected to conceal its responsibility for the murders, "roved with knives about the streets of Dublin. Discontent had stirred in the ranks of the Royal Irish Constabulary. . . . Over half the country the demoralisation of every class, the terror, the fierce hatred, the universal

[1] Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, i. 353.

distrust, had grown to an incredible pitch. . . . The power of random arrest and detention under the Coercion Act of 1881 had not improved the moral of magistrates and police." [1]

In such conditions vaguely informed public opinion concentrated upon Ireland could only do harm. It happened fortunately that popular interest was suddenly drawn off, by the discovery that a riot in Alexandria on 12th June was an affair of the utmost seriousness. Fifty Europeans had been killed, and the troops under Arabi were raising new batteries round the harbour. The great mass of commonplace people in England never penetrated, during the ensuing events, much beyond the figure of Arabi himself. He was a rebel of some sort, and the reason for our being engaged in suppressing him gave no pause to the ordinary man. He knew that three years earlier, in June 1879, the Khedive Ismail of Egypt had been deposed in order to make way for a complete reconstruction of the financial position of his country. He knew also that in this reconstruction England had taken a leading part among the European Powers; and it was obvious that the work could not go forward if the peace were disturbed. Roughly speaking, such a simplification of the facts had actually occurred by this time; but for the authorities both in England and in Egypt the progress of events during the past eighteen months had been extremely baffling. The International Commission of Liquidation, whose main work had been to unify at a fixed rate of interest the immense mass of irregular unrelated loans raised by Ismail, had naturally been obliged, in securing the administration of the finances, to overhaul some departments of the public life of the country. The army, for very good reasons, had not been dealt with. For one thing, it was more unequivocally a Turkish affair than most of the questions in Egypt. The suzerainty of Turkey,

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 70.

a mere shadow in most respects, had been maintained over the army, and the permission to keep a standing army of 18,000 men was specifically given in the Sultan's new firman after Ismail's deposition. Any attempt, therefore, to bring the army into relation with the new life of Egypt was bound to be a delicate matter; and unluckily, when the attempt was made, it was unwisely handled. The presentation to the Khedive in January 1881 of a petition from the army seems to have been such an attempt, since it complained not only of arrears of pay, but also of a system of promotion based on anything but merit. But the petition further demanded the dismissal of Osman Rifki Pasha, the Turk who was Minister for War in the Egyptian Government, and showed generally so much anti-Turkish feeling that Riaz Pasha, the Khedive's Prime Minister, treated it as mutiny. Technically, no doubt, it was mutiny, but the plain course in that case was to take steps to secure some part of the army, and arrest the ringleaders. Riaz took the foolish step of sending for the two officers known to be chiefly responsible for the petition to appear before a Council of Ministers, hoping that his intention of conveying them from the council to prison would not be divined, and that the army, left leaderless, could then be reduced to discipline. Of course, the troops saw through the device, broke into the room where the Ministry was sitting, and rescued the two officers. They were Arabi Bey and Ali Bey Fehmi. The Khedive, caught with no force at his back, was compelled to overlook completely the rescue of the two colonels, and the army was given a sudden new sense of power. In fact, the collapse of authority was so thorough that the army itself was scared, as people are apt to be when a door which they were making ready to force suddenly opens from within. The question arises: what is behind the door? This nervousness, the fear of retribution at any moment, had produced the *émeute* of September 1881, which had vaguely brought

Egypt back to the mind of the English public. An order issued to the 3rd Regiment of Infantry—Arabi's regiment—to proceed to Alexandria had been interpreted as a first step towards punishment, by separating the leaders of the movement. Arabi with 2500 men and some artillery marched to the Abdin palace, demanding to see the Khedive. The Khedive was at another palace, but under the advice of Sir Auckland Colvin, the British Agent in Cairo, he returned to Cairo—displaying no little courage—and met Arabi, who dictated to him the dismissal of the Ministry, the summoning of a parliament, and the raising of the army to the full establishment allowed by the Sultan's firman. The Khedive acceded at once to the first demand, on the condition that the two others were referred to Turkey.

It will be noticed that in these demands a new element appeared. The phrase about summoning a parliament was an open profession of co-operation between the army and the Nationalist party in Egypt; and this brings us up to the year of our present survey—1882. The Nationalist party was not strong; it was a group which had come together in the days when Ismail's rather crude interest in European progress had created an expectation of experiments in constitutional government. At the beginning of 1882 the group had, however, attained some importance, because, on the dismissal of the Riaz Ministry, Cherif Pasha had been appointed Prime Minister, and he had imbibed deeply the idea of constitutional experiments. He had therefore persuaded the Khedive to agree to the summoning of a Chamber of Notables, one of Ismail's schemes, and it met in 1882. The question of how far Arabi's movement was a Nationalist one is at the root of much of the controversy that has since taken place in England. Mr Wilfrid Blunt was in Egypt at this time, and he wrote a letter to *The Times*, published on 6th February, in which he asserted that the army had not made a political

move, and did not intend to make one. At the same time the two movements could hardly be kept apart. Arabi himself had remarked in a statement of his case that "the army was the only power able to protect the growing liberty of Egypt"[1]; and before many months were past Mr Blunt was championing Arabi on the widest Nationalist grounds. There was indeed some fusion of the two movements; and it is traced by Lord Cromer to an unfortunate mistake by the British Government.[2] In January 1882 Gambetta was still in power in France, and his ambition led him to try to keep pace with British energy in Egypt. He suggested a Joint Note to the Khedive, in which Lord Granville, agreeing after some demur to its presentation, let pass a phrase harmless enough in appearance but disastrous in effect. It was this: "The two governments, being closely associated in the resolve to guard by their united efforts against all cause of complication, internal or external, which might menace the order of things established in Egypt . . ." etc. Now the Chamber of Notables had just met for the first time when the Note was presented, and inevitably it saw the word "internal" in the phrase just quoted as aimed at itself. In the resentment thus aroused the Arabists and the Nationalists were thrown into one another's arms; and the tone of the whole Note, as thrusting back the Sultan's prerogative in Egyptian affairs, took on a deeper colour. At that moment Gambetta fell, and confusion was made worse confounded by a sudden reversal of French policy. Under M. de Freycinet, his successor, the party which believed the whole Egyptian question to be a device of Germany's for locking up French troops in Egypt prevailed; the propulsion due to Gambetta in the direction of an Anglo-French occupation ceased, and was replaced by a policy of inviting Turkish intervention. It was a policy singularly difficult

[1] *The Times*, 3rd January 1882.
[2] *Modern Egypt*, i., cap. 13.

to direct at a time when the earlier policy had been carried far enough to irritate the Porte; but the British Government did its best. A conference of the Powers was invited to meet at Constantinople, to enter into consultation with the Porte with a view to military action by Turkey against Arabi under Anglo-French instructions. But the Porte at first refused to take part in the consultations; and when at length it did agree to do so, it wasted weeks in considering, altering, accepting, and withdrawing from the Anglo-French proposals. Meanwhile it had sent two more commissioners to Egypt with contradictory instructions, one to repudiate Arabi and the other to intrigue with him. Not unnaturally the "nerves" of the leading spirits in Egypt grew worse and worse under the delay.

Arabi, suspecting plots against himself, had forty-two officers and men arrested on a charge of conspiracy, and had Osman Rifki Pasha and forty others exiled to the furthest Soudan. The army was out of hand, its pay had been increased with no reference to the ability of the Budget to provide the money, and officers were being promoted absurdly. The riots in Alexandria in June, and Arabi's feverish entrenchment of himself in the forts, showed that the nervousness had become uncontrollable. The Powers, not being possessed of nerves, continued to confer, but a message was sent from the Sultan ordering discontinuance of work on the forts, and England invited the Powers generally to send ships to make an international demonstration off Alexandria, from which and from all the Delta the Christians were taking flight. The invitation was not accepted; and when, a month later, Arabi was defying the Sultan and mounting guns again in new forts, only a British squadron lay off the port.

The public at home, little concerned as to the origin of such a situation, waited on the tiptoe of excitement. It

was not disappointed. At daybreak on 10th July Admiral Seymour, in command of the squadron, gave notice that, failing Arabi's compliance with the Sultan's orders and surrender of the forts within twenty-four hours, he should open fire. A night or two before, the ships had suddenly turned their electric lights upon the forts, and the startled gunners, not knowing but that the new flash might be some deadly form of gunnery, stampeded from the batteries.[1] When the bombardment began on 11th July they were far from stampeding, and their reply from the forts was not ineffective; they had big and powerful guns to handle. But by five o'clock in the afternoon the bombardment had done its work, and Arabi's troops were in flight. A certain irresoluteness on the part of the British Government showed itself in the absence of any orders to the fleet beyond the bombardment. No force was landed, and in the general disaster of the flight Alexandria was set on fire, and immense damage done. However, on the whole the policy of merely taking each question as it arose was for the present not unsuccessful. When it became clear that Turkey's suspicions and dilatoriness were unsurmountable, the British Government made ready more *ad interim* steps. Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent out to Egypt before July was over, with an expeditionary force, the line taken now being the necessity of protecting the Suez Canal, as the Egyptian troops were practically at large in the Delta. Arabi had in fact written a letter to Mr Gladstone, offering him an allied Egypt which would keep open England's road to India, but threatening, if he were attacked, to bring about a general Mohammedan rising and the destruction of the Canal.

In little more than two years this Government, which had come into power to end foreign embroilments, had become engaged in war, and involved in a conflict of interests as hazardous as any of Beaconsfield's. France,

[1] *The Times*, 10th July 1882.

at the time of Wolseley's operations, "resumed her liberty of action in Egypt," and England recognised the end of the Dual Control[1]; so that a very present source of international disagreement had definitely opened. The measure of this distortion of the hopes and intentions of Liberals in 1880 was given by the resignation of John Bright from the Government. He declined on his Quaker principles to be a party to the prosecution of war; and though Mr Gladstone felt that Bright had shown insufficient appreciation of the "facts of the case with the obligations that they appeared to entail,"[2] it is not difficult to see the general justification of his action. The mind of England was running again on the barren glorifications that he hated. The rare spectacle of a fleet in action had stimulated popular imagination, and the armoured train with its Gatling guns, which was used for reconnaissances from Alexandria, was almost like a new toy to the public. Later in the year there was great disappointment because the authorities refused a request from the City of London that British and Indian soldiers from Egypt might be allowed to take part in the Lord Mayor's Show. It was a condition of popular temper which might well be too much for John Bright. Nor could it but confirm that detachment of idealistic forces from politics which has been mentioned. This Government seemed indeed indistinguishable from any other Government; and Parliament had at the same time a curiously helpless aspect. A peculiarity of its work just now, which was commented upon with some gloom, was the number of temporary measures of legislation.[3] The Employers' Liability Act of 1880 was to terminate in 1887; the Corrupt Practices Acts were all limited in duration; the powers of the Railway Commissioners were not perpetual; a measure to

[1] Cromer's *Modern Egypt*.
[2] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 83.
[3] *The Times*, 12th July 1882.

remove restrictions on the negotiation of promissory notes was valid for only three years; a measure dealing with habitual drunkards was to remain in force until 1890. Parliament seemed to mistrust its own efforts. Moreover it did its work with great difficulty, and had to face this year a profound alteration of its procedure. Closure of debate, so much discussed in the previous year, took shape in a new Standing Order permitting the Speaker or Chairman of Committee to bring debate to an end by putting the question on a motion being made to that effect, provided that division on the motion showed not less than two hundred members for the closure, or not less than a hundred when the opposition to the motion showed less than forty members. It was not a severe resolution, in view of later steps of the same kind. Yet it was much disliked; and Lord Randolph Churchill found it a good stick for beating the Government. That it was necessary is clear enough, when we find the Government programme again "carrying over" such measures as the Bankruptcy Bill, the County Government Bill, and the Municipality of London Bill. Other questions, too, were accumulating for Ministers. For instance, several great inland towns were pressing for an assimilation of excise procedure with that of customs, the grievance being that, whereas at ports the customs arrangements allowed "bonding" on a large scale, there was no such possibility in inland towns, except in some "wet" trades. A few towns—Manchester, Leeds, Halifax and Bradford—were by a fiction treated as ports; other big places like Birmingham, Sheffield and Wolverhampton had no way of "bonding" dry goods.

However, while idealists were standing so far aloof from the proceedings of Parliament, an Act was passed which was to give them the widest possible scope in that sphere of "administration" which they so much affected—the Municipal Corporations Act 1882. It did not attract notice at the time, being nominally designed for the con-

solidation of all the amending and supplementary Acts which had been passed since the Municipal Corporations Act 1835. Some such consolidation was indeed necessary, owing to the perpetual accretion of duties under laws like the Public Health Act of 1875, the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act 1878, and the Weights and Measures Act 1878. Moreover reform was still called for in the matter of old, sometimes corrupt, corporations which had survived the Act of 1835. There were still bodies like the Mayor and Burgesses of Dunwich, an almost extinct village, who were entitled to receive copies of all public documents from the Stationery Office; the Mayor and Barons of Corfe Castle, who had the patronage of a number of sinecure salaries; and the Corporation of New Romney, who disposed among themselves of an income of £800 from municipal lands. The new Act, by making burgess-ship purely a franchise, and not an office, effected a final reform. The important feature of the Act, however, was that, while specifying the obligatory work of a municipality (such as the provision of necessary establishments, the maintenance of local police, etc.), the Act did not circumscribe its functions. In other words, while setting forth what a corporation *must* do—not on any exacting scale—it refrained from putting any statutory limit to what it *might* do. The limitations in that respect were judiciously left to the natural human objection to paying heavy rates. This stroke of peculiarly English genius arouses the enthusiasm of a foreign observer like Professor Redlich.[1] The things that a corporation might do, instead of being subject to the approval of a bureaucratic department, remained in the sphere of private bill legislation; and thus Parliament, and not a department, is the final authority. The wide democratic franchise under the Act, including all ratepayers of twelve months' residence before 15th July in any year, and not excluding women, pro-

[1] In his book, *The Local Government of England.*

vided both a stimulus and a check; the corporation would be anxious to retain the support of the citizens by progressive measures, and at the same time any overloading of the town with debt would show its result in the ballot boxes. "Rate collectors far more than any central Boards of Control are the real schoolmasters of municipal policy."[1]

In the national life generally the year was marked by a return of better temper. Trade was good; reconsideration of rents had somewhat eased the farmer; the cereal harvest was fair, and the root harvest good. The social world was enlivened by a greater disposition on the part of the Queen to be seen. It may be mentioned in passing that the last of the few attempts on her life took place on 2nd March, when a man, who was subsequently adjudged a lunatic, fired a pistol at her as she was driving out of Windsor station. There was, it is true, a singularly heavy death-roll of notable men. On 3rd January Harrison Ainsworth died, out of humour with a world which his later novels had failed to attract, and in which he had not succeeded as the man of fashion he wished to be. On 4th January Bernal Osborne made his exit from a London where he had kept alive the witty traditions of the days of Alvanley. Dante Gabriel Rossetti died on 11th April, in the midst of the period when the Pre-Raphaelite movement was being violently spread abroad by the general æsthetic craze. The death of Darwin on 20th April brought from abroad such unprecedented appreciations of an Englishman's work that this country became conscious in a new way of the achievement represented by the evolutionary theory; and this may account in some degree for that outbreak of extreme antagonism between scientific research and orthodox theology which reverberated through the middle eighties. Dr Pusey died on 17th September; and the occasion served for articles reminding a generation much entangled in Ritualist controversies,

[1] Redlich's *Local Government*, i. 393.

in the imprisonment of recalcitrant clergymen, that only a vulgar confusion could have made the word "Puseyism" synonymous with advanced ritualism; his mystical conception of the Church and her work, founded on a wonderful knowledge of early Christian writers, remained throughout his life indissolubly linked with a piety of the Wesleyan rather than the Tractarian spirit. On 4th December died a very different Churchman, Archbishop Tait. He had had stormy years of rule, yet he preserved to the end that belief in a sweet reasonableness which he was always ready to apply. His last application of it came before public notice within a week of his death. He had effected a compromise in the St Alban's case, by which Mr Mackonochie was transferred to St Peter's, London Docks. It did not in the least conciliate anti-ritualists.

In the revival of trade the shortage of gold grew more troublesome. Some of the responsibility for it was put down to the prosperity of the working classes, which caused "a large absorption of gold"; and it was this aspect of the problem which brought to the front this year a proposal for issuing one-pound Bank of England notes. Another aspect which worried the financial authorities was the question of meeting the wear and tear of the gold currency. Short supplies of the metal caused the coins to remain long in circulation; and the result was that the currency was falling dangerously in real value. This point, however, may be postponed until the time when the Treasury at last attacked it. The South African goldfields were coming more into the public eye; there had been a "rush" to the De Kaap fields, and "placer" mining was not unsuccessful. But the men with money were showing themselves more cautious than the men without, although it was pretty well known that only mining on a large scale, with heavy machinery, could work the deposits thoroughly. For the time being fortunes were made in other ways.

Nitrates just then were making millionaires; and the experience of American farmers in fattening stock was causing almost a boom here in oilcake, and new speculations in cotton-seed oil works.

It is not, after all, these signs of a solid prosperity that most give the year its air of better spirits. That is to be found rather in such a revelation as is provided by the immense and serious interest taken in the removal of Jumbo to America. Jumbo was the great elephant at the Zoological Gardens—the largest that had ever been seen out of the native lands of elephants—but he might have been thought to be otherwise an ordinary elephant until it was suddenly announced at the end of January that Barnum, an American showman, had bought him for £2000, and was going to transport him across the water. The whole nation was stirred. Some disputed furiously as to whether he had or had not been a difficult animal to handle, and whether his keeper's statement that his temper had grown queer was or was not a mere excuse to cover his removal. Others, equally serious, called in question the legal right of the "Zoo" to dispose of animals without obtaining in some way the consent of the nation. Lighter-hearted folk jested, often as ponderously as the subject could require; songs sprang up in the streets, and Jumbo practically filled the ordinary man's mind until, two months later, the departure took place. It was described as fully as if it had been the departure of a prince. The adventures of the enormous crate in which Jumbo was drawn to the docks by a long string of horses, the quarters provided for him on board ship, were all set forth by every newspaper in the land; and Lady Burdett-Coutts went on board to give him his last London bun. The public's cheerful readiness to be amused had another opportunity in August, when Cetewayo came to England. Responsible people were shaking their heads about his visit, and it had, in fact, been once postponed; it was not long since he and

his Zulu people had been in arms against us, and the question of his restoration to the chieftainship, which he undoubtedly hoped to forward by his visit, caused some nervousness. But London only saw in him a stout, genial, black potentate, whose bellicose prestige they could pardon because, if it had cost the English something to beat him, he had at any rate very handsomely worried the Boers. So people gathered in crowds at Melbury House, Kensington, where he stayed, to see him drive out. He paid visits to both the Queen and the Prince of Wales; and he managed to keep up his imperturbability until he was taken to Woolwich Arsenal, and then he confessed that he had really been overwhelmed with astonishment at the sights and sounds and resources of England ever since he had landed.

The newest marvels of civilisation were continuing their advances. The year is notable in the history of electric lighting for the fact that a new step, described by Professor Sylvanus Thompson in a scientific lecture in March, had been taken by the invention of "little electric lamps made by enclosing in glass bulbs thin wires of platinum or thin strips of carbon which on the passage of an electric current grow white hot"[1]; the importance of the invention for domestic lighting was at once seen. The immediate sequel was a series of disputes as to patents between rival inventors, chiefly Mr Edison and Mr Swan. The use of arc lamps for street lighting had meanwhile so thoroughly established itself (Birmingham, Brighton, Canterbury, Newbury, Sheffield and East London had installed it) that the great corporations, led by Manchester, were on the alert against possible monopolies; and the Government had in hand an Electric Lighting Bill designed to regulate the foundation of companies. The Bill ultimately included a clause giving local authorities power of compulsory purchase of electric light undertakings at the end of twenty-

[1] *The Times*, 18th March 1882.

one years. The telephone was conquering long distances; in July experiments were made in speaking from Brussels to Paris, and in December a line was working between Brighton and London. But as yet the National Telephone Company's revenue was no more than £27,000 in the year, and its profits £4217.[1] Tramway experiments moved more slowly; a car, worked from accumulators under the seats, was tried at Leytonstone in March. A minor invention of the year which should not miss a place in this record is the fountain pen; the stylograph had been in use for some time, but late in this year descriptions were published of the application of the reservoir principle to a pen with a detachable double-pointed nib.[2] Nor need one hesitate to attach to the march of progress the tentative prominence attained this year by the advocates of "rational dress." A lecture in February by Mr Frederick Treves on the unhygienic dress of women was followed in March by an exhibition organised by the National Health Society of hygienic dresses, the patterns being gathered chiefly from America and Germany; they included "divided skirts," but the mocker was not yet aroused.

So much indeed was progress in the air that the Londoner's dissatisfaction with his own local government grew acute. A month could not pass without some complaint either against vestries or against the Metropolitan Board of Works; of the former this one or that was slow to lay down wooden paving (1880 had seen much activity in that work), while the latter was attacked because of the smell of sewers, or petty interference with private building projects. From this atmosphere of complaint about the merest trivialities of local control the Londoner looked out and saw the provincial corporations, not niggling over petty duties, but launching out into all sorts of public services. He found himself under a form of government

[1] *The Times*, 19th August 1882.
[2] Ditto, 6th December 1882.

which derived no fresh strength from the new Municipal Corporations Act, because it was not a corporation; and for the same reason had but the meanest responsibility towards the citizens. The demand for a municipality of London became therefore one of the items of regular appearance in political speeches of this time. It happened that the autumn provided two striking examples of the courage of provincial corporations. In October the Manchester Ship Canal project first became of interest to the country at large; Alderman Bosdin Leech, of that city, was writing letters to the Press to enlist the public attention. The scheme was unanimously approved at a town's meeting held in Manchester on 14th November, and although there was naturally some apprehension as to the cost of the undertaking, the prospect of direct importation of goods to Manchester was a powerful argument, especially as only in the previous year the cotton trade had been seriously hampered by a "cornering" of cotton in Liverpool, and a period of gambling which had raised the price of raw cotton by 10 to 20 per cent. The other piece of remarkable municipal energy was the progress of the scheme for supplying Liverpool with water from the Welsh hills; the laying of the great mains through Delamere Forest at the end of this year was a picturesque period of the work. But the provincial corporations were by now influencing the community in more subtle ways than these. A great Art and Industrial Exhibition was held this year in Manchester; and William Morris, speaking at the opening ceremony, was able to point to a general improvement in industrial art. The work of all the local schools of manual art, which had slowly been established in the large industrial centres, of the Workmen's Institutes, the Athenæums, and other such places, was beginning to tell. A Royal Commission was sitting, which, imperfectly appreciated though it was at the time, ended by altering entirely the aims and scope of national education

—the Commission on Technical Instruction. It was the recognition of all the local schools, and so the first step towards their expansion into a system of higher education.

General Wolseley did not keep the nation waiting long for news from Egypt. Moving rapidly, he attacked Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir on 13th September—one of the notable night attacks of military history—inflicting a complete defeat on his troops, and taking him prisoner, with other leaders of his army. No memory remained now of a Nationalist character in the movement; Arabi was called a mere military adventurer, Egypt had had to be "rescued from him," his foot had been "on her throat"; and a general impression that the war was over led to the commutation a few months later of the sentence of death passed upon Arabi by the court martial in Cairo on 3rd December. He and six of his associates left Egypt for exile on 26th December. It seemed that the Government, pottering on from point to point, had come out of the business fairly well after all. They directed their agent in Cairo, now Lord Dufferin, to proceed with a rehabilitation of Egyptian finances in view of a speedy withdrawal of the British troops. But their lack of a clear purpose in Egypt showed itself now in the fact that, while speaking of withdrawal, they were lending an ear to considerations which could not possibly be reconciled with withdrawal. Upper Egypt was the last great stronghold, it was thought, of slavery, and the licences to trade in the Soudan, which were issued by the Egyptian Government, were more or less open licences for slave-raiding. Consequently even those Liberals who had been least inclined to continue a policy of interference in Lower Egypt now began to confuse Mr Gladstone's mind by pressing upon him duties in Upper Egypt. We miss much of the difficulty of the Egyptian struggles of the next few years, and the true nature of Gordon's mission to Khartoum, unless we see

that Mr Gladstone's lack of any real interest in the Egyptian question rendered him peculiarly open to conflicting impulsions from different sections of his followers. The suppression of slavery was an old ideal, and the zeal to pursue it in the Soudan is one of the reasons why Tel-el-Kebir is the beginning, and not the end, of a story. Another reason had recently been causing anxiety in Egypt itself. Just at the time when Arabi's movement had been growing strongest in Cairo, in August 1881, a man in the Soudan had proclaimed himself Mahdi—an assumption of direct spiritual kinship with Mohammed, and divine inspiration—and the universal hatred there of the Egyptian Government secured him an immediate following. But no real knowledge of what was going on in Upper Egypt prevailed among those well-intentioned people who were pressing the slave trade upon Mr Gladstone's attention.

On the whole the year ended not amiss for him and his colleagues, and the foundation of the National Liberal Club at a large meeting on 5th November was an enthusiastic mustering of new forces. In Ireland the Crimes Act, putting an end to those activities of the Land League which had survived in the Ladies' Land League, had been helped in its effect by the loss of heart in the Irish party after the Phœnix Park murders. It may be mentioned here, since Patrick Egan rendered his accounts of the Land League funds to Parnell in October of this year, that the League had handled the sum of £244,820. Of this, in round figures, £50,000 had gone to relief of distress; £15,000 to the expenses of trials; £148,000 had been spent by the League and the Ladies' League in support of evicted tenants, the erection of wooden houses for them, defence against ejectments, etc.[1] The cases of agrarian crime now fell from 4439 in 1881 to 3432 in 1882; but the true state of the case is better shown by the fact that for 1883 the figures dropped with a run to 870. We see

[1] Parnell Commissioners' Report, p. 96.

Mr Gladstone himself, according to one of his Cabinet, taking a "*couleur-de-rose* view" of the condition of Ireland.[1] Egypt appeared to have been successfully dealt with; and the summing up of the Government's position on the traditional occasion of the Guildhall Banquet was that they had done well, and that the Conservatives had no good fighting ground; Lord Randolph Churchill's "Balaclava charges" were magnificent, but not war.[2] The autumn and winter were singularly free from labour troubles. In the early part of the year there had been some anxiety in London; a large deputation of unemployed men waited upon the Lord Mayor, representing printers, carpenters, bricklayers, painters, warehousemen, navvies and smiths. Except in its combination of a number of unrelated trades, this deputation hardly amounted to the faintest mutter of the storms of a few years later; and the winter brought no distressing signs of lack of employment. The vitality of the Socialist movement was, however, apparent in the revival of the newspaper *Freiheit*, in spite of a general refusal of printing firms to publish it. At the same time the prosecution of a paper called *The Freethinker* on a charge of blasphemous libel was attended by comments which showed that even the respectable world was inclined to think that it was a mistake to aim at suppressing such organs of opinion. "Whether from growth of charity, or indifference, or perplexity, or experience of the mischievousness of persecution," *The Times* remarked, "most men are not inclined to put in prison the apostles of the views which they most detest, and they are rather at a loss what to do with persecuting laws which remain unrepealed."[3] The socialists, fighting for their own freedom of speech, have often since fought for freedom in other than political matters; and in the

[1] Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, i. 369.
[2] *The Times*, 10th November 1882.
[3] 19th July 1882.

struggles of the eighties for the liberty of street-corner meetings socialism and irreligion were confused together, as we have already seen them confused in the case of Mr Bradlaugh's seat in Parliament.

A subject which attained no little public discussion in the autumn of 1882 was the idea of cremating the dead. Two persons who died about that time had left instructions in their wills that their bodies were to be burned. No facilities existed for carrying out the instructions; nevertheless the bodies were burned, and the subject continued to be so much written about that within a few years the difficulties experienced in regard to these early cremations were entirely removed.

CHAPTER V

1883: A YEAR OF GROUNDSWELL

AS the Government's tenure of office extended, it became more and more clear that the Liberal victory of 1880 had been due rather to a revulsion from Disraelian policy than to any arraying by the Liberal leaders of the progressive forces of the country. By this time the temporary bond had fallen asunder, and the year was marked in every direction by a futile restlessness. The Egyptian question had brought about a coolness with France, an atmosphere in which any subject of dispute might become very dangerous. The Irish question reeked once more of dynamite. The forces of social reform and moral effort moved in a world agitated by strikes, and those of material reform saw the spectre of cholera looming across the waste of bad housing and sanitary deficiencies.

The " resumption of liberty " in Egypt, which had been the French attitude towards the bombardment of Alexandria, revealed itself in certain respects at the beginning of the year in Cairo as a complete breaking up of the Control. Unfortunately Baring, who had displayed a peculiar gift for investing the Control with a loose working equipment in which points of punctilio could not arise, was in India.[1] He did not return to Egypt until June 1883. Meanwhile a quarrel was brewing in regard to the Suez Canal. The irritation of shipowners at what they regarded as excessive levies for the passage of the Canal had issued in a proposal that application should be made to the Khedive for a concession for a second canal, parallel with the existing one,

[1] He was Financial Member of the Viceroy's Council.

the idea being rendered plausible by the argument that in any case the amount of the traffic demanded a second waterway. This, however, did not help the shipowners, for M. de Lesseps, the builder of the existing canal, claimed a monopoly for his enterprise, and a prior right to any concession for a second; he had a draft agreement in readiness for its construction at a cost of eight millions.[1] The French authorities saw in the proposal another sign of England's determination to secure to herself every advantage in Egypt, by tricking them out of their chief remaining source of power there. Towards the close of the year the dispute took a different direction, the English demand being now for the acceptance by the Suez Canal Board of an advisory committee of shipowners. De Lesseps was himself in England at the time, and was being entertained in Manchester, where the citizens hoped for the support of his name for the Ship Canal project. He avoided committing himself to that; and took instead every opportunity of insisting upon the autonomy of the Suez Canal Board. It was, indeed, a period of bad blood between the two nations in which an amicable settlement of such a question, however much either side may have had its legitimate grievances, was impracticable. In July there was an ugly outburst of feeling in England, caused by rumours that the French flag had been hoisted in the New Hebrides; the demand was instantly raised that the New Hebrides should be formally annexed to Australia, and that, to make complete use of the opportunity, New Guinea should be annexed at the same time. Barely a week later reports reached England of the arrest of a British subject by a French admiral at Tamatave, in Madagascar. The island had been under French influence for two hundred years, but this treatment of it as a French possession was not to be allowed to pass. Luckily the British subject, who had been deported to Réunion, was released six weeks later,

[1] *The Times*, 24th July 1883.

and that incident was closed.[1] It may be noted here that the state of our relations with France in 1883 settled a question which of late years had agitated a good many minds. Early in 1881 the scheme for a tunnel under the Channel to connect England and France by railway had made a sudden advance. Borings had been undertaken at Dover, and as a result detailed estimates of cost had been made possible. Now the English military authorities, headed by Sir Garnet Wolseley, declared against the project; they said they could not assure the country against invasion by the tunnel, and an Anti-Channel-Tunnel Association was formed. The promoters, however, went forward, and introduced a private Bill into Parliament, which came before a Joint Committee of the two Houses in April 1883. It reported in July against the Bill, though not unanimously. The military evidence had carried the day.[2]

The distortion which had been given to the Irish situation by the Phœnix Park murders only became fully apparent in this year. In Ireland itself difficulties diminished; the statistics of agrarian crime fell, as has already been mentioned, to 870; evictions fell from 5201 to 3643; and agitation by speeches and all the forms of boycotting diminished greatly. But alarm and panic shifted to England; dynamite explosions occurred in London, and there were a number of seizures of explosives by the police. The "Kilmainham Treaty" had been disliked by the Clan-na-Gael; and Parnell's attitude after the Phœnix Park murders would have led to an open repudiation of him but for his useful gift of never being agreeable to the English.[3] We have seen that he had felt in Kilmainham gaol the danger of leaving the field to less cautious persons; and the helplessness that overwhelmed

[1] *The Times*, 1st September 1883.
[2] Ditto, 19th July 1883.
[3] Barry O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 377.

him at the news of the Phœnix Park murders prevented his recovering his influence over the Clan-na-Gael. Therefore, while he could and did moderate the pace of agitation in Ireland, he had lost for the moment his general hold on violence; and the London explosions were the result. It was the Invincibles' year, and it opened with one of the most famous dramatic moments in criminal records. The Crimes Act of 1882 had rendered possible processes of arrest which had placed under lock and key a number of men suspected of complicity in the Phœnix Park murders. By the middle of January nineteen men were in detention. Two informers had given assistance to the police, but the prisoners did not really fear the evidence of these two. Then, as they filed into the dock one day during the preliminary proceedings, they saw one of their own number divert his steps, and their defiant confidence was over. The scene when James Carey took the witness-stand has been described by more capable pens, and need not be retold here. His evidence convicted six men, and two pleaded guilty. Six were sentenced to death, but the sentence on one was commuted. Five men were hanged, Brady, Curley, Fagan, Kelly and Caffrey; and Delaney, Mullet and Fitzharris were sent to penal servitude for life. The Invincibles were not men to sink into obscurity after such events. Throughout the first half of the year they were the bogey at which suburban England continued to shiver. The newspapers canvassed the identity of the terrible "Number One," who had appeared in the Kilmainham evidence to be a power horribly supreme. The British Government made friendly representations to the Government of the United States on the hatching of Irish-American plots in that country; Fenian brotherhoods were reported to be devoting Sunday excursions up the Hudson River to the amiable purpose of experimenting with explosives. The Home Office stimulated local authorities in England to a more vigorous search for dynamite, and more alertness to

its possible manufacture in their districts; and prohibited in the public interest an exhibition of explosives which was to have been held in all innocence in Sheffield. On the top of all this the Invincibles showed that the popular notion of their organisation was not exaggerated. On July 30th a man, who had attracted no notice among his fellow-passengers, was shot dead on board a liner which had just reached East London, Natal. He was Carey the Informer. The police protection which had sufficed to screen him entirely from the eyes of the world at large, and ship him off in complete secrecy to South Africa, had not saved him from the Invincibles. Beside this *coup* their other violences of the year seemed almost tame. On 15th March an explosion took place at the Local Government Board offices; it caused no loss of life or serious injury, and not much damage to any part of the building beyond the windows; but it remains a famous explosion, because it was the return of a terror that men had begun to forget. On 30th October two explosions occurred on the Underground Railway, one at Praed Street Station, and one between Charing Cross and Westminster. In both cases some persons were injured, but no one was killed.

If Parnell had lost his grip on this current of Irish agitation, he had certainly not lost the confidence of Ireland. It became known during this year that in his zeal for the cause he had let his family estates and his own financial position become heavily encumbered. A public subscription was set on foot, and it acquired a more than passing interest, because it was the means of bringing into public notice what has been known as the Errington incident. In 1881 the English Government had had the curious notion of getting aid from the Vatican in dealing with Ireland. At first the idea was only that the Vatican might restrain priests in Ireland from supporting agitation; and Mr Gladstone, in a letter to Cardinal Newman, expressed the opinion that it was the Pope's positive duty

to exercise this restraint.[1] With that object, documents detailing the attitude of certain priests had been conveyed to Rome by Mr George Errington, an Irish Roman Catholic gentleman, who had gone there for the purpose. He was not, Mr Gladstone was careful to explain, an official emissary, but a volunteer in the matter. However, as he had gone with letters from Lord Granville, and as his despatches were deposited in the Foreign Office, the distinction is insignificant. It would be hard to find any real difference between the position of Mr Errington at Rome in 1881 and the position of, say, Lord Odo Russell in the late sixties. No representative of the British Government could be acknowledged an "official" representative at the Vatican, since that would have implied a recognition of the temporal power of the Pope. But just as Lord Odo Russell was to all intents and purposes a Minister Plenipotentiary, so Mr Errington was an Envoy Extraordinary in all but the name. Cardinal Newman had held out little encouragement to Mr Gladstone to look for Papal intervention, and none came at that time. It did come in 1883, in connection with this national tribute to Parnell, and the result of it showed that the Vatican's first decision had been the wiser. A Papal rescript against the tribute was issued. Up to that moment the sum collected had been £7000, and six months after the rescript it was £37,000. Mr Gladstone in after days told Mr Barry O'Brien that the acceptance by the Government of the Errington mission had been chiefly due to Lord Spencer.[2]

The influence of the Irish question on the Parliamentary year of 1883 was rather indirect. The obstruction of recent years had been met for the moment with the Closure resolutions; but the effect of it had gone deeper than the immediate result. The House, in long and trying sessions, had been feeling that it must strike out some new lines of

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 52.
[2] Barry O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, ii. 26.

dividing its work, if it was to have time for real discussions of policy. It had the high ideal of not bounding its view by the legislative necessities of the day: "Parliament is not merely a legislative body. It is the Grand Inquest of the nation charged, in addition to its legislative duties, with the custody of Imperial interests, and called upon to lead and to form the public opinion of the time.[1]" The institution of Grand Committees, to relieve the House of some of its work, was the first attempt of Parliament to keep its head, so to speak, above water. These Committees, empanelled by the Committee of Selection, were two in number—the Grand Committee on Law and the Grand Committee on Trade.[2] They were sanctioned by the Commons in 1882, but went to work for the first time in 1883, relieving the House of the necessity under which it had hitherto laboured of forming itself into committee on every Bill other than a private Bill. By the new arrangement a considerable quantity of work was delegated. Two other attempts to save time were now in progress. In 1882 a Department of Agriculture had been proposed, and in 1883 a Department for Scotland was a prominent subject of discussion. Both were the butts for somewhat easy sarcasm; the Board of Agriculture, it was said, would not know what to do with itself, and as for a Department for Scotland, there was not more logical reason for setting it up than for setting up a Department for Yorkshire. However, the scheme went forward; and Lord Rosebery's assistance in working out the details was perhaps his first important public service. For the rest Parliament had but a stale bill of fare. Bankruptcy legislation was still before it, a reforming Act being passed this year; County Government (with its attendant subjects of London Municipal

[1] *The Times*, 6th January 1881.

[2] The committees were not altogether invented at this time. Sir T. Erskine May found precedents, upon which the committees were designed.

reform, and especially a reform of the water supply authority) and the county franchise had not yet been touched. The last was the most vital of the subjects, for Lord Randolph Churchill was devoting himself to it. He was arguing that the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer was not called for, even by the labourer himself, and that a rearrangement of boroughs and a redistribution of seats would be the truer franchise reform at the moment.[1] The failure of the Affirmation Bill of this session has been recorded [2]; it was the last expenditure of the time of this Parliament on the controversy that had arisen about Mr Bradlaugh's right to take his seat. In spite of Mr Gladstone's eloquence, in spite of a widely spread feeling that it was unwise to mix dislike of Mr Bradlaugh's opinions with the general question of preserving in Parliament a religious test which had elsewhere disappeared, the Bill was rejected on 3rd May. But at least this particle of good resulted—that there was agreement henceforth to leave time to do the work—time and the ultimate disappearance of conditions in which the question was useful to an Opposition somewhat poorly equipped. How ready the Opposition was to adopt weapons from any quarter is seen in their immediate following of the Liberals' idea of a huge political club, which should give the social amenities of such institutions to men of political inclinations who could not hope for admission to the older clubs. Two months after the meeting for the promotion of the National Liberal Club, one was held by the Conservatives to found the Constitutional Club. Both places may be, and have been, regarded cynically by those of Pall Mall and St James's Street. The historian's interest in them is that they were the first clubs in which considerations other than those of social fitness were recognised in the election of candidates, and in which political opinions became a qualification.[3]

[1] *The Times*, 12th April 1883. [2] See p. 41.

[3] The Carlton and the Reform, though broadly Tory and Liberal, do not technically require the holding of certain political opinions

It is remarkable that the year saw no fewer than eight Sunday Closing Bills before Parliament, three of them applicable to the whole country and five to separate localities. This, like the growing strength of the Local Veto movement, is an interesting reminder that the Blue Ribbon Army was at the time making great strides. It had been founded in 1878 on the model of an organisation which had been very successful in the United States. Mr William Noble, who had for some years before that date been a prominent platform speaker in the cause of temperance, on returning from a tour in the States enlisted the interest of several philanthropists and took the Standard Theatre, Shoreditch, which was then untenanted. His ardent zeal was so contagious that for nearly two years, from February 1878 till January 1880, he continued to fill that place with audiences; and when he was compelled to leave it, because of its approaching demolition, the Blue Ribbon Army was already a great force, and the pledge cards used by Mr Noble were in demand all over the country. English distaste for the parading of opinions must have been undergoing curious modifications when it was possible to note, among the striking events of a year, the spread of two such organisations as the Blue Ribbon Army and the Salvation Army.[1] The latter, indeed, was fighting its way in a very literal sense. We have already had occasion to note the hostility it called forth, and an actual organisation of a sort had arisen to combat it. The "Skeleton Army" has been forgotten now; it appeared in 1888, fighting the Salvation Army outside the Eagle Tavern in the City Road, and these encounters occurred persistently, Sunday after Sunday. Both the Salvation Army and the Blue Ribbon Army (and we may perhaps

as a qualification. Brooks's, again, is broadly Liberal, but that is a survival of its original character as the Whigs' Club, and Whiggism was always as much a social as a political qualification.

[1] *The Times*, 30th December 1882.

mention with these the missions of Moody and Sankey, who returned to England in 1883, and were in Liverpool and Manchester in March and in London in November) were elements in that reconsideration of a nation's duty towards its less fortunate members, which was replacing the individualism of the great industrial expansion. Crude as the Salvation Army's methods appeared, the way for educated people to meet them was seen to be by doing the work better ; and this was more than an intellectual retort. The death of Arnold Toynbee, on 11th March 1883, served to bring to light suddenly a whole world of sociological enthusiasm, of zeal and affection for the unfortunate, which had been steadily modifying the trend of politico-economical thought; and when the knowledge of Toynbee's own efforts turned men's minds to the poorer parts of our great cities, it was with the result of making them conclude that the Church of England was not behindhand in the new spirit, and that " in forty years the clergy had advanced immensely in public esteem," by their devotion to the practical as well as the spiritual work at their doors. Two distinct lines of thought were, in fact, tending towards the same end. The spiritual revival which began with Wesley and Whitefield, as an evangelising movement not parochial in its scope, had been followed by the more parochial, because more strictly canonical, revivalism of the Oxford Tractarians. While the religious spirit of the universities had been thus modified, the philosophical outlook underwent a change almost as profound under the domination of T. H. Green. He had but lately died—on 26th March 1882—and his lectures had been spoken of at his death as "the very heart of the philosophical education of Oxford."[1] The effect of his work had been to quicken the sense of social responsibility, and to raise up a school which both hastened the distrust of the old individualism, and presented a very guarded front to the new theories which the

[1] *The Times*, 27th March 1882.

popular mind was summing up in the phrase "the survival of the fittest." The forces that came into view on the death of Arnold Toynbee therefore were combined forces of religious and secular impulse, and this dual character has continued to be displayed in the Social Settlement movement that arose with the foundation of Toynbee Hall in 1884. There was, indeed, an earlier settlement in existence. The Ancoats Brotherhood had been founded in 1877 in Manchester by a devoted citizen, Mr Charles Rowley. It was not specifically a University settlement, but drew upon the services of any one who could be attracted to the work. It was an isolated enterprise, and not until after the death of Toynbee can there be said to have been a Settlement movement. The movement crystallises for us several of the somewhat inchoate aspirations of a new day. The settlements were to be centres in the poorest parts of great cities for the dissemination of that humaner education without which the improved conditions that were the workman's goal would be but a barren achievement. They were to help the educated classes to see that a sound Liberalism must hope, not to raise the working man out of his class but to produce a community of mental outlook between classes. They were to help the masses of the poor to see in knowledge their truest leadership, and to learn to distinguish between knowledge and frothy acquisition of political dogmas. Thus the Settlement movement was partly, at least, the reply of the intellectual middle class to the attitude of the artist-socialists. "Radicalism," William Morris wrote in this year, "is made by and for the middle classes; they will have no objection to its *political* development, if they think they can stop it there; but as to real social changes they will not allow them if they can help it." And again: "It is obvious that the support to be looked for for constructive socialism from the working classes at present is nought

. . . What we want is real leaders, themselves working men, and content to be so till classes are abolished. But you see when a man has gifts for that kind of thing he finds himself tending to rise out of his class." [1] University settlements were the denial of both of these positions. Such advances as the Socialist movement made in 1883 were not spectacular. Some knowledge of the propagandist work that was being done may be gathered from the fact that late in August the question of the power of public authorities to prohibit meetings in such places as the London parks was being raised. Nervousness about these meetings was certainly growing, assisted perhaps by the dynamite explosions, which had nothing to do with them; for, when it was announced that the site of the disused Tothill Fields prison at Westminster had been bought by the Roman Catholics for their cathedral, the Government was sharply criticised for not keeping the site as a central depot for troops in case of rioting. Something of the same nervousness is visible also in the withdrawal of several members from the Cobden Club this year, because of the admission of one or two foreign politicians " of an advanced, not to say revolutionary, character." [2] But though the socialists were clearly mustering some of the unemployed waste lives of London streets, they were not yet definitely mobilising them. In January Louise Michel came to England to lecture on the oppression and sweating of women in France, and to urge English people not to let the education of the girls of the working classes fall behind that of the boys. She spoke, as it happened, at a moment when women in this country had achieved a notable amelioration of their status. The Married Women's Property Act came into force at the beginning of this year, abolishing the old system under which a woman's property passed on her marriage into

[1] Mackail's *Life of William Morris*, ii. 103, 111.
[2] *The Times*, 18th June 1883.

her husband's control. Henceforward a married woman could hold property and carry on business in her own right. One of the minor effects of the measure was to give particular interest to the debate on a Woman Suffrage Bill introduced by a private member in July. The question arose whether married women were also to have this form of liberty, but the mover of the Bill repudiated any such intention, confining his proposals to single women who would be able to qualify as householders. The Bill was rejected by a majority of 16 in a House of 245 members. Meanwhile the advanced woman was interested in a subject which came to be attached, like a kind of label, to the feminist movement—a Rational Dress Association, with Lady Harberton as a moving spirit, offered prizes for a design of a suitable knickerbocker costume for women.

One of the most prominent items in the programme of social reform, the better housing of the poor and the destruction of insanitary areas, was forced upon public attention this year by a scare which was to be repeated in ensuing summers. Early in July the ravages of cholera in Egypt grew alarming. The disease did not on this occasion spread as far north in Europe as it did in a later year; but our traffic with Egypt was sufficient to cause the issue of most stringent regulations in this country. These were aimed less at setting up quarantine than at making the amplest provision for dealing with any cases that might make their appearance here, the idea being that, if energy went too much to quarantine preparations, which could hardly be relied upon to exclude infection absolutely, we might be caught behind the barriers with inadequate isolation arrangements. A Cholera Bill was hurriedly passed through Parliament; in effect it constituted the local managers of the Metropolitan Asylums Board separate authorities under the Public Health Act, and it suspended certain Acts of Parliament and extended others so as to give the fullest powers everywhere for

making hospital provision. The more lasting result of the alarms was a new concern in this country for sanitation in every town, and especially in the ports. In November Sir William Forwood was calling the attention of the Liverpool Corporation to the fact that there were at that moment 15,000 houses in that town, containing 60,000 people, which were all unfit for human habitation. At this time no section of the community was under any responsibility in the matter of house sanitation, nor was any authority charged with enforcing a general standard. In 1880 there was a proposal to set up in London a society which should provide for its members, at a subscription of a guinea, expert inspection of the drainage of their houses; and peculiar point was given to the proposal a few months later by a doctor, who related the disastrous processes by which he had discovered that his own house, in one of the wealthy quarters of London and on an estate which had been developed not haphazard, but deliberately as a region of the well-to-do, was actually not connected with the main sewers, but was built over old cesspools.[1] Medical men generally were disturbing the public apathy in such matters. The bacterial theory was a fresh and forcible ally; and in 1883, even before the cholera alarm spread, the problem of housing and sanitation was being attacked from a new angle—that of the infectious nature of tuberculosis.

One reason, no doubt, for the advance which medical opinion was making in affairs of public health was the feeling—a somewhat complacent feeling, perhaps—that this was a scientific age. The same spirit which put Agnosticism and Religion into the lists, and watched them fight out their battles in the public prints, predisposed men to attend to the gospel of the doctors. The theory of the survival of the fittest justified every exhortation to being on the side of the fit. Incidentally it sent the Londoner and his country cousin to gaze at a creature exhibited this

[1] *The Times*, 20th April 1881.

year at the Westminster Aquarium, a very hairy child brought from the territory north of Siam and said to have a slight tail! To call this creature "the missing link" was enough to make it the talk of the town. The Aquarium was still prospering in the curious career which made it in itself a historical link. Some of the old free promenading and some of the old impropriety of Ranelagh and Vauxhall lingered in its large spaces and its vague atmosphere of side-shows; while the performances of such people as "Zaeo," who was much advertised during 1880 and 1881 in the programme on the central stage, was a sign of the changes that were turning the old cellars and halls of song into the modern variety music-hall. The Aquarium clung to its character, and thereby to its public, even though the music-halls had developed entirely on their own lines. Mere singing no longer sufficed for their programmes. They had even a public which made them rebel, at this date, against the restrictions preventing them from producing stage plays[1]; and which caused the observant to reflect on the division of classes which was growing up in amusements as in everything else. It was a somewhat superficial reflection, but at the moment it was easy to think that there were divisions, just because the places to which people of any class might go were easy to single out. One of them was St James's Hall, and its chief entertainment in this year was of a kind that had taken a curious hold of the public caprice. It was a thought-reading performance; and the exposures in previous years of the fraudulent character of the grosser forms of "spiritualism" had caused those who made their living out of this kind of interest to turn to the less material devices. In 1881 there had been two prosecutions on charges of false pretences arising out of the older sort of performance; one an affair of "slate-writing," and the other of crystal-gazing and table-turning. The thought-

[1] *The Times*, 3rd February 1883.

reading which succeeded those exposed tricks did not long go unattacked; the performer at St James's Hall was challenged by Mr Labouchere to "read" the number on a banknote deposited by him in an envelope held by a certain Member of Parliament. The thought-reader demanded conditions on his own side, and for weeks the fairness or unfairness of the challenge, and the real nature of the performance, were under discussion in the newspapers, even scientists like Professor Ray Lankester coming forward with theories. The challenge never developed beyond a contest of wits as to the conditions. Another event in the amusement calendar of this year was the Fisheries Exhibition, the first of a series of specialised exhibitions which had great success, and became annual London entertainments. The Fisheries Exhibition was said at the time to have done much to popularise the eating of fish, but probably its success could be attributed to the exhibition of strange kinds of boats and boating gear. The centre of attraction was the display of equipment for Arctic exploration, which at this time shared with ballooning the first place in the popular admiration of adventure. It was even a craze which could be mildly scoffed at, for *The Times*, writing in April of the opening of the Arctic "season," said it had become as regular as the University Boat Race or the Twelfth of August.[1] Exploring parties of various nationalities were annually engaged in taking observations round the Polar basin.

Aeronauts, perhaps fired with a desire to be taking the popular eye with definite performances, were devising oversea flights. An attempt made in 1881 had been disastrous, Mr Walter Powell, M.P., having lost his life in the Channel while crossing to France. It was not until 1883 that the first success was achieved. On 13th June of this year the news arrived that a Frenchman had made an ascent, and at first it was thought he too had perished;

[1] 4th April 1883.

but a few days later he was landed by a fishing boat, having been picked up in the Channel; he had come near enough to the English shore to hear the waves breaking. On 1st August a voyage was at last accomplished, Sir Claude de Crespigny and others crossing from Maldon in Essex to Flushing; and in September the English Channel was crossed twice—on 10th September by a Frenchman who landed near Folkestone, and a week later by an English party which started from Hastings and landed at Cherbourg. To the year's record of adventure belongs also the news published in London on 26th July that Captain Webb had been drowned in attempting to swim the rapids below Niagara Falls. It was a foolhardy enterprise, but the world could anticipate anything from the man who had achieved the feat of swimming the English Channel, with its baffling tidal currents. On that former occasion Webb had been in the water for twenty-one hours and three-quarters, and the distance he swam was estimated variously at from thirty-nine to forty-five miles.

Mention may be made here of the death of another man who stood in a different way for daring and romance. Captain Mayne Reid died in London on 23rd September. He was the last writer of those immense and fluent tales of adventure, of which he and Fenimore Cooper and G. P. R. James had the secret. Their works were already "books for boys," and taste for the long novel in masculine hands had gone back into the main channel of English fiction, from which the writers of adventure stories had for a time partially diverted it. *John Inglesant* had been published in 1881, and won its instant success; the work of George Meredith had certainly accomplished no insignificant advance when it was spoken of, not as obscure, but as "dazzling with excess of light"; Mr Henry James's art was already classed as "exquisite."[1]

A survey of the state of trade at the beginning of the

[1] *The Times*, 13th August 1883.

year gave rise to the warning that a time of restricted profits was at hand [1]; and there can be no doubt that the warning was based largely on the uneasiness of the labour market. The Trade Unions took a new step this year by joining in an International Congress of workmen's organisations. In one sense the Congress was not taken very seriously; it was thought that there could be little real co-operation between labour movements in this country and those in other countries, since the latter aimed rather at producing direct State action upon industrial problems than at assisting sectional efforts of the workmen for better conditions. But even without international agreement there was enough to make employers anxious, and Mr Henry Fawcett, urging them to take up profit-sharing as a means of steadying the industrial situation, expressed the opinion that it was "vain to expect any marked improvement of general economic conditions as long as the production of wealth involves a keen conflict of opposing pecuniary interests." What effect any wide adoption of the profit-sharing principle might have had at this time, before Trade Unionism underwent the vigorous development of the later eighties, it is vain to conjecture. It was not attempted. In January the year saw its first strike, a serious one on the Caledonian Railway, in which long hours and an exacting system of fines were the chief complaints of the men. The passenger traffic was carried on with difficulty, and the goods traffic was practically suspended, a state of things which was bound to lead to an early settlement. The strike was over before the end of the month. The autumn brought other strikes. Late in August the weavers in Lancashire came out, and their dispute lasted over a month. The Darlington iron and steel workers were also out, and so were the Sunderland engineers; and by the end of November there was daily expectation that the cotton spinners and the Yorkshire

[1] *The Times*, 10th January 1883.

miners would strike. Masters and men were at loggerheads as to the reality or otherwise of the trade revival, the latter demanding a share of increased profits, while the former denied that the revival had brought any real profits. The coinage problem was a baffling element in such disagreements. For the moment the bank rate, which had been 6 per cent. at the beginning of 1882, had gone down to 4 per cent., though no one believed it could long remain there. The lightness of gold coins, owing to wear and tear, was becoming too serious to be set aside, and in February there was talk of a steady calling-in of sovereigns. However, this year saw the first distinct expectation of relief from a new supply of the metal. In May Mr Goschen suggested that the Treasury authorities could perhaps afford to wait, in view of "the rumours, apparently well-founded, of a great discovery of gold in the territories north-west of the Transvaal." This shows how curiously the real area of mineral wealth—the Rand—was still in the background; and a communication a few weeks later from South Africa shows the same thing. It spoke at large of the "Transvaal goldfields," but the details were all of nugget-mining in the Lydenburg and Spitzkop districts, and on certain farms where old Portuguese workings, long overgrown, were being opened up. The scale of mining which was in the public eye can be judged from the statement that two claims worked quietly for twelve months past had actually yielded £6000 worth of gold; and that claims owned by Cape Town adventurers had gone up in value from £24 to £50. Yet before the year closed, telegrams from South Africa were beginning to be couched in terms which can easily be seen, in the light of subsequent developments, to give the first hints of the truth. A Transvaal mining law was promulgated on 18th August; and in November it was announced that certain "rotten quartz leads" were being opened, and crushing operations commenced. The "placer" miners had been

throwing away quartz that would have crushed out at four ounces to the ton. Their day, and the day of four-figure annual returns, was almost over. Naturally, however, there was some reluctance to risk money in mines situated in the territory of the Boers. No friendliness on their part could be relied upon to protect mining rights, or to encourage the production of gold to the profit of British shareholders. It happened that delegates from the Transvaal were in England at the end of the year, laying before the Government a request for the abolition of the indeterminate "suzerainty" of Great Britain, and the establishment of the absolute freedom of the Transvaal. Their presence was put to service by the exploiters of one or two gold companies, floated in December. The delegates were appealed to on the subject of the Transvaal Government's attitude, and they replied in some indignation that that Government had no desire with regard to the goldfields except "to see the mineral resources of the country developed to their fullest extent." But as yet only some rather shoddy enterprises made their appearance, with so much accompaniment of quarrelling as to the real vendors and the real owners of claims that the public remained cautious.

In a year of restricted business spirit new ventures were not likely to advance far. Electric lighting was checked by the non-existence as yet of any system of supply from a central generating station; the inventors were for the time being in their laboratories again, trying to work out such a system. The only event of the year worth recording under this head is the first use of the light in a church; it was installed at St Matthew's, Brixton, in September. No advance was made in the use of electric power for propulsion, though a tramcar working on storage batteries was put into service on the Acton lines, and did regular duty among the horse cars. The extent of the field open to the inventor of a practicable method of propulsion was

seen to be great; trams had become so general that London now had seventy miles of line working, Manchester and its suburbs had forty-two miles, and the total length of tram lines in the kingdom was four hundred and forty-four miles.

Almost at the end of the year came a piece of news which was the opening of a most unsatisfactory chapter in Egyptian affairs. On 22nd November information reached Cairo that Hicks Pasha, the British officer who was in command of the Egyptian forces in the Soudan, had been completely overwhelmed by the Mahdi, and his army destroyed, during a march undertaken by him from Khartoum to attack the Mahdi. He ought never to have been in the Soudan; but the English Government were now displaying the foolish attitude of supposing that, when they had said they did not intend to be drawn into difficulties in Egypt, they had settled their part in the matter. They had thought this enough when, in the spring of 1883, General Hicks had been appointed to the Soudan army. The dangers in the Soudan were obvious to the English authorities in Egypt. It was a vast territory of provinces with widely separated headquarters under various governors; it was garrisoned by an army undisciplined, unpaid, thoroughly unsoldierly; its provinces were nearly all cut off from one another by the Mahdi's forces; one province, Kordofan, had fallen completely into his hands in February 1883. Darfur, under Slatin Bey, was practically beyond defence. What could there be, it might well be asked, to entangle the British Government in a war in the Soudan, when the utmost that could reasonably concern them was the existence of sufficiently stable conditions in Lower Egypt to keep the Canal open and the bondholders' interest regularly paid, and when even to preserve that minimum they had become impatient of maintaining military responsibility? After the annihilation of Hicks Pasha's force it was too late to ask that question. It was

indeed possible even then to determine upon withdrawal of the Soudan garrisons, and the establishment of a firm frontier against the Mahdi between Upper and Lower Egypt. But it was not possible for the Government to leave the work to either the Egyptian or the Turkish authorities. The Mahdi had seized the popular imagination. Ministers had put off determined consideration of their duty until the humanitarian pressure not to leave the field to slave-raiding—a pressure which they might, with a little clear sight and plain speaking, have overcome —was reinforced by public outcry against the supremacy of a barbarous ruffian. The Government moved now in a series of jerks, communicated by successive outcries, having missed once for all the opportunity to establish a purpose of their own.

The record of this year may be coloured by mention of a curious phenomenon which filled many evenings with beauty. The sunsets of the summer and autumn were so magnificent that they became the general topic of conversation. The reason for them appeared to be an eruption of the volcano Krakatoa, in the South Pacific. This, according to the scientific view of the phenomenon, had loaded the whole atmosphere of the globe with impalpable dust, which caught brilliantly the level rays of the setting sun.

CHAPTER VI

1884: GORDON AT KHARTOUM; MR GLADSTONE AT OTHER AFFAIRS

ON 8th January 1884 it was announced in the London newspapers that General Gordon was leaving England for the Congo to take up an appointment offered him by the King of the Belgians; and there ensued gratified comments on the possibility that the slave trade through Upper Egypt might be checked at its source by a firm hand in the Congo territory. But there were other comments, far from gratified, on allowing Gordon of all people to pass into the service of a foreign state at such a time, when, if anything was to be done in Upper Egypt itself, he was, in the popular opinion, the man to do it. By 18th January the Congo appointment had been declined, and Gordon and Colonel Stewart left London for Egypt.

In the ten days' interval there had been another public outcry, vigorously gathered to a head by *The Pall Mall Gazette*. It has an interest beyond the immediate circumstances, because it was probably the first occasion on which a newspaper set itself, by acting as the organiser of opinion on a particular detail of policy, to change a Government's mind at high speed. However strongly newspapers had spoken before this on political subjects, they had not adopted the method of hammering, day in, day out, at a single detail, and turning policy into a catchword. That was almost what happened now. The cry of "Gordon for Khartoum" was raised to such a pitch that the Government decided they had after all been right in their first idea. For they had been thinking of him a month earlier. In December 1883 they had suggested to

Sir Evelyn Baring in Cairo that Gordon might be sent to Khartoum. Baring had rejected the suggestion, and he rejected it again when it was repeated. He was for withdrawal from the Soudan, establishing the Egyptian frontier either at Berber or at Wady Halfa; and was maintaining that attitude in the face of the resignation of Cherif Pasha, the Egyptian Prime Minister, and the refusal of Riaz Pasha to form a ministry; and he did not wish anyone to be appointed to carry out the withdrawal who might be moved by conflicting ideas. He mistrusted Gordon in that respect. But unfortunately the Belgian appointment brought Gordon's name into prominence at the moment. He had been in the Soudan before, having only retired from command at Khartoum in January 1880, with a fine record of energetic action against the slave dealing along the White Nile [1]; he was a hero both to the general public and to the Anti-Slavery Society; and as the Government had not previously adopted the only indefeasible line, that of forbidding any English officer to go to the Soudan, it failed to stand up against the clamour for sending Gordon. The Cabinet had had its warning from its representative in Cairo. Baring had been perfectly explicit against sending any Englishman to the Soudan at this crisis, and especially against sending Gordon. No Englishman could be left unsupported at Khartoum, so that to send one was bound to mean a Soudan expedition; and to send a popular hero would mean also an unmanageable heat of feeling in England.[2]

Mr Gladstone's reputation has suffered heavily for the blunder. His great age, which he seemed to bear so easily, inevitably appeared in his inability to deal with subjects that failed to interest him, in over-absorption in the subjects that did interest him. One member of the

[1] See an article on his work there in *The Times*, 22nd January 1880.

[2] Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, i. 428.

Government used to say afterwards that Mr Gladstone took virtually no notice of public affairs between the Irish Land Act of 1881 and the Home Rule Bill of 1886; in the House he often appeared quite torpid during debates on any subject remote from Ireland. At the same time his great reputation and popularity with his party made the state of his thoughts and feelings the final consideration in the Government. He disliked having any responsibility to Egypt; the undertaking of it was to his mind the worst piece of "Beaconsfieldism." The result of this was that those who saw the gravity of the situation—saw that Mr Gladstone was neither turning his back on the whole question, nor facing it clearly—could not against the weight of his personality compel the Cabinet to consider the question. In the critical months of 1882 Lord Hartington had written: "I wonder whether any human being (out of Downing Street) would believe that not a word has been said in the Cabinet about Egypt for a fortnight, and I suppose will not be for another week, if then"; or again: "I am afraid that there is no chance of a Cabinet or of getting Mr Gladstone to pay any attention to Egypt while the Arrears Bill is going on."[1] The same conditions existed in 1884. In the summer, directly after the preliminary credit for the Khartoum expedition had been voted, the Cabinet dispersed over the country, even though no one definitely knew the facts of Gordon's situation; and a few days earlier Mr Gladstone, drawing nice distinctions between Khartoum "surrounded" and Khartoum "hemmed in," had blandly proposed "to collect the sum of the evidence as to Gordon's position"[2]—a position as to which some of Mr Gladstone's colleagues had for months been in correspondence with the Government's representative in Cairo. The passionate resentment against Mr Gladstone after the death of Gordon was not quite justly based. It

[1] Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, i. 363, 365.
[2] *Ibid.* i. 477.

was not the single—and to some extent debatable—question of the delay in the Khartoum expedition which provides the most serious charge; it was the extent to which a Prime Minister allowed his distaste for the whole Egyptian complication to prejudice his mind against dealing with detail.

The situation in the Soudan was in itself complicated enough to demand steady attention; it demanded more, once Gordon had been despatched. Possibly the considerable amount of service which he had undertaken for foreign Powers, in circumstances which had emphasised his personal responsibility, combined with a strongly marked religious strain which in any case made his sense of that responsibility high, had rendered him by this time ill-fitted for the mere carrying out of orders. It is at any rate certain that before he was finally shut up in Khartoum he had virtually refused to act on orders, and was pursuing a policy of his own. The apprehension which Lord Cromer had felt in regard to the appointment was to be fully justified. Even on the way out to Egypt Gordon had procured the first modification in his instructions. He had in his interview with the Cabinet in London undertaken no more than the duty of reporting upon the situation in the Soudan, with a view to evacuation. While on the voyage he thought that he could do the work better if he had definite official status, and he induced the British Government to secure from the Egyptian Government his nomination as Governor-General of the Soudan, believing the evacuation could be carried out with more dignity if it were accompanied by a restoration of the petty sultans of the Soudan provinces, instead of leaving the country openly to the Mahdi. This was not in one sense a great change of policy, especially as Gordon, on receiving his written instructions at Cairo, himself insisted on the insertion of a most emphatic clause binding him to evacuation; but it was a great departure from the

British Government's previous determination. An Englishman as Governor-General was far from a non-committal attitude.

On his way up to Khartoum Gordon made a strange and serious mistake. At Berber he proclaimed the intention of evacuating the Soudan. It was characterised by Lord Wolseley as "a fatal announcement"; he wrote to Lord Hartington (13th April 1884): "This has prevented all men of any influence from helping. . . . Knowing that anarchy, or possibly anarchy *plus* the Mahdi, must follow upon Gordon's departure, every one thought only of his own safety. . . . To help Gordon under such circumstances would have been suicidal on any man's part."[1] The proclamation was particularly ill-timed, since the Mahdi's influence was being extended by Osman Digna dangerously close to Berber. Valentine Baker Pasha, who had been sent to reinforce the Suakin garrison when the defeat of Hicks Pasha threatened the Suakin-Berber route, had moved out rather hastily with Egyptian troops against Osman,[2] and his force had been cut up on 5th February. Consequently when Gordon reached Khartoum, on 18th February, the surrounding of that place had become more than a possibility. Luckily the Egyptian Government was able to send up to Suakin at once 4000 British troops under General Graham, whose two defeats of Osman Digna at El Teb on 29th February and Tamai on 13th March kept that warrior for a while from assisting in the isolation of Khartoum.

The news of these battles, with all the picturesque detail of fighting in squares with Gatling guns at the corners, and of the wild charges of the "Fuzzies," as the Mahdi's troops were being called, was followed by the first of the eagerly awaited news from Khartoum itself, messages reaching London on 21st March from Khartoum by way of Berber.

[1] Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*.
[2] Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, i. 400.

They were dated 14th and 15th March, and conveyed the information that Gordon had been engaged in small military operations round Khartoum, chiefly for the purpose of extricating the garrison of Halfiyeh; it was also intimated that Khartoum was practically surrounded by the enemy. To the British public the affair was already a war; they had in their own simple view pitted Gordon against the Mahdi; and in the constant meetings held throughout the summer to protest against the "abandonment of Gordon" (for as early as the month of May the situation was so regarded) there was one continuous note of bewildered amazement at the Government's failure to conceive the position in this plain sense. Unfortunately to Gordon also it was by that time a war. He had passed through another of the changes of mind which so perplexed the Government at home, and their representative in Cairo. He had not yet entirely declined (as he was to do before long) the policy of evacuation which he had so emphatically accepted in the beginning; he had only got as far as a new and more complicated version of "evacuation, but not abandonment." He was asking in March that an Egyptian Governor-General with a British Commission (his own being technically an Egyptian Commission) should be appointed; and he asked for a particular man—Zobeir Pasha. Now although to the general public in England this was an incident of no such vividness as battles in the desert, it is not too much to say that it made the Government gasp. Moreover it upset that humanitarian opinion which had worked so ardently for Gordon's appointment Zobeir had been the greatest and most unscrupulous of the slave traders of the Soudan and had been deported for that reason to Cairo; and here was the idol of the Anti-Slavery Society demanding his appointment as Governor-General! As a matter of fact this was exactly one of those strange quixotic pieces of fearlessness which had made Gordon a popular hero. In his former period of office in the Soudan

he had had occasion to approve of the execution by one of his lieutenants of Zobeir's son. Yet believing now that Zobeir was a man who could hold Khartoum against the Mahdi, and even recover a large part of the Soudan, he declined to be influenced by any possible danger to himself in bringing Zobeir up to Khartoum. He was, no doubt, right in his belief. The experiment would, indeed, have been a risky one. Zobeir might join the Mahdi; or, if he did not, he might become as troublesome to Lower Egypt as the Mahdi could. But of his warlike reputation in the Soudan, of his ability to rally the natives to him and hold Khartoum if he chose to, there could be no possible doubt.[1] However, Gordon's wish never got beyond the stage of suggestion. The general proposition that the Soudan should not be abandoned had support in England; Khartoum left to be the capital of a slave-trading state was not a pretty picture. But the difficulty was that no one could think of any person capable of holding it except Zobeir; and the only practicable policy was that of sending him. The Anti-Slavery Society hotly opposed it, and they found the Government especially ready to listen to them, since Gordon's proposal involved a direct British Commission to Zobeir and a subsidy of money. At the same time it was distinctly implied that the policy of evacuation was beginning to slip into the background in Gordon's mind. Two or three weeks after this Gordon finally abandoned the idea. Towards the end of March two of his pashas were defeated, by the treachery of their own troops, in engagements near Khartoum; Berber was seized with panic, and all who could left the place. The fighting spirit in Gordon was roused, and those in England and in Cairo whose minds had been wholly set on withdrawing from the Soudan to a point of safe defence for Lower Egypt were staggered by receiving from him furious telegrams in which he announced his intention of "smashing the Mahdi"

[1] Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, i. 450.

before considering anything else. His change of mind was complete. It is fair to pause here for a moment to consider how differently the situation must have appeared to him and to the Government at home. It is probable that only he knew the extent to which the Soudan provinces were at that moment mere detached headquarters amid a sea of Mahdism, islands incapable of communication. It may be doubted whether even before Gordon arrived the garrisons of the southern provinces—Darfur, under Slatin Bey, Bahr-el-Ghazal, under Lupton Bey, and Equatoria, under Emin Pasha—could possibly have made their way north. Their predicament weighed heavily on Gordon's mind; he could see no way of saving them and at the same time saving the garrisons of the eastern and northern provinces, Sennar, Kassala, Berbera, Khartoum and Dongola. The Soudan was cut in two halves by the Mahdi; and this explains the historic telegram despatched by Gordon on 7th April 1884, announcing his intention of retiring to the Equator, and leaving to the British Government "the indelible disgrace" of abandoning the northern and eastern garrisons. He intended evidently to gather up Lupton, Slatin and Emin on his way, and withdraw by the Congo, since he could see no possibility of conveying them northwards. It could hardly be of much profit now to speculate on what might have been done. Gordon, as we have seen, began by a proclamation which set the whole disaffected population of the Soudan on the alert for withdrawal movements, and went on to a misleading distinction between evacuation and abandonment. By the time that he sent the telegram of 7th April the situation had changed as completely as his own mind had changed. Khartoum was cut off from Dongola and Berber, and no relieving movement towards Berber from Suakin could be undertaken, because the weather was too hot for the marching of troops. The only thing that had not changed was the attitude of the British Government; and the

result was a hopeless interplay of cross purposes for two or three months. Gordon, feeling himself shut up in Khartoum, was confident that, as his isolation was known, a relief expedition would be on the way to him, and he issued, therefore, whenever opportunity offered, intimations of his ability to hold out. The Government, never having had any intention of sending British troops to the Soudan, and interpreting Gordon's messages in a wholly different spirit from that in which they were sent, held to instructing him to withdraw, and awaited his appearance. Mr Gladstone's view, as late as 31st July 1884, was that to send an expedition either to Dongola or to Khartoum would be "to act in the teeth of evidence as to Gordon, which, however imperfect, is far from trivial."[1] That Lord Hartington was as much bewildered as anybody by Gordon's behaviour and his contradictory telegrams may be seen from his letters to Lord Granville. "I have read Gordon's telegrams again," he wrote, "and I confess that I am utterly unable to understand them. . . . I think that all we can do is to look at the position as it is known to us from other sources, and to pay no attention to what he says." Granville was inclined to conclude, from the fact that messages were passing from Gordon to the Mudir of Dongola, that the Cabinet's messages were equally reaching Gordon and that he would not answer them.[2] In the end it was "looking at the position as it is known from other sources" which at last moved the Government to undertake an expedition. The preliminary credit was voted on 8th August; and Lord Wolseley drew up a plan of campaign. This did not commend itself to General Stephenson, who was then in command at Cairo, and Lord Wolseley had to be sent out to take command. He left Cairo with his force on 5th October. By that time there had been no communication with Gordon for six months, except that on two or

[1] Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, i. 477.
[2] *Ibid.* i. 489, 492.

three occasions in June and July messages had come from him asking as to the whereabouts of the relief expedition. It had been a long delay; but, as we have said, the blame which the Government has to bear should be placed further back than these events, and on more general grounds. The confusion of ideas at the time must have been extreme, and the blame must rest on the mistakes of omission and commission alike which led up to the events of 1884. It is, for instance, worth recalling that Mr H. M. Stanley, who happened to reach London in July of this year from the Congo, expressed himself in an interview as perfectly confident about Gordon. He derided the whole idea of a Nile expedition in the summer (for which popular opinion in England was pressing), saying that the men would die like flies; and he asserted that Gordon could leave Khartoum when he liked, and withdraw by the Congo—that he only needed "to act like a soldier," and rescue would be unnecessary.[1]

With the undertaking of the expedition popular attention slackened. Little news was coming through from Egypt, and what came was not of importance. It is more interesting to us now than it was to people then to know that Major Kitchener was at Dongola, whence there was some hope of his making communication with Gordon. If in the pause that ensued English people looked at affairs nearer home, they must have decided that, if their attention had not been so taken up with Egypt, they would still have had a sufficiently exciting year. An earthquake had occurred, which was distinctly felt in London and the Midlands, but was quite serious in Essex, where so much damage was done in the villages that a fund had to be started for rebuilding houses. There was a succession of dynamite explosions, generally occurring two or three at a time in different places, which gave the appearance of a regular campaign. The long-expected County Franchise

[1] Interview published in *The Times*, 29th July 1884.

Bill had been produced, and over it Lords and Commons were flatly at war. The dynamite explosions began with a railway station series: on 27th February there was one at Victoria Station; fortunately it occurred in the small hours of the morning, and there was no loss of life. A day or two later infernal machines were discovered, before they went off, at Charing Cross and Paddington. On 31st May there were explosions at Scotland Yard, the Junior Carlton Club in Pall Mall, and a frustrated attempt at the Military Education Office in St James's Square; at the same time a bag of dynamite was found near the Nelson Column in Trafalgar Square. In September the alarm spread outside London, a quantity of dynamite being found at Sunderland on the 13th, and an explosion taking place in the Council Chamber at Salisbury on the 29th. Nervous as the public had become, there was by good fortune so little loss of life, or even injury, in these explosions that there was no panic; nevertheless black bags without obvious owners were for a year or two regarded with extreme disfavour and suspicion.

The County Franchise Bill, which would in any case have given the Government plenty of work, found itself early in the year dragging an unexpected weight. On 7th February a meeting of members of Parliament was held at the House of Commons to consider the moving of a Woman Suffrage amendment to the Bill. One was drawn up, and the moving of it was undertaken by Mr Woodall; it proposed to enfranchise women householders. The movement for enfranchising women was at this date influential, but limited. It had been in existence for some twenty years, and was almost exclusively a movement of educated women who, having found their own careers hampered by the absence of arrangements for admitting women to university courses and examinations, to professional diplomas and professional practice, naturally went on to contemplate the general position of women under the law and under

social custom; and came thence to the conclusion, expressed for them most efficiently by J. S. Mill, that until women had the same political status as men they must continue to labour under disabilities in any society politically constituted. Theoretically the movement was not confined to the more highly educated classes of women; but practically, although its leaders spoke and wrote to some extent of the wage-earners, the active suffragists were women who had had a university training, or had qualified as doctors, or were distinguished writers. The pledged supporters of the movement were not very numerous, the annual income of the principal suffrage society being about £350[1]; but its members were mostly women of proved capacity, and the suffragist cause did not lose by the limitation. Mr Woodall's amendment gave the movement an occasion such as it had not yet enjoyed. Since it had attained force and publicity its only opportunities, and they but rare ones, had been in the shape of private members' Bills, which no one took seriously. Now, however, an opening of a different kind presented itself, and frequent public meetings were held in support of Mr Woodall's amendment. Whether it was a genuine opportunity is questionable; it could hardly in cold blood be considered possible that a measure dealing only with a certain class of constituencies, and proceeding on lines already tried, should be the vehicle for an experiment in a wholly new principle over the entire kingdom. Moreover the subject fell instantly into the vortex of party. A good many Conservatives were said, indeed, to be convinced supporters of the movement—Lord Salisbury, Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord John Manners and Sir Michael Hicks Beach among them—and it is interesting to find *The Times* speaking of a Woman Suffrage measure as "the trump Conservative card which Lord Beaconsfield kept

[1] See, *e.g.*, report of the annual meeting of the society, *The Times*, 10th July 1889.

in his hand." [1] But the honesty of general Conservative support for the amendment was deeply suspect. Mr Gladstone had announced that if the clause were carried he would throw up the Bill, and thus a great deal of the Opposition vote for it was purely opportunist. On 12th June the amendment came up for discussion, and was rejected by 271 votes to 135.

This adventure was speedily lost sight of in the gathering of a far more considerable storm in regard to the Bill. By assimilating the county franchise to that created in the boroughs by the Acts of 1832 and 1867, the Bill swept away the old property limitations of the vote in country places, and gave it, as in boroughs, to the occupiers of rated dwelling-houses. It thus enfranchised the labourer; and the change, both in the number and in the educational level of the electorate, was great. In July the House of Lords rejected the Bill, some warning of such an event being perhaps conveyed by the action of the Opposition in the Commons who, on the third reading, did not go into the Lobby at all, but walked out of the House. The ground which the Lords alleged for their rejection of the measure was that it was only half a scheme, and that a redistribution of seats should have accompanied so large an alteration of the electoral basis. Mr Gladstone, while agreeing that the two operations should come into action together, asserted roundly that to have grappled with them in one Bill would have been an insane attempt. He informed a party meeting, held at the Foreign Office immediately after the vote in the House of Lords, of an offer made to the Tories that, if the Bill passed, both Houses should adopt an identical resolution saying that they had passed the Franchise Bill in reliance on a promise that the accompanying Redistribution Bill should be introduced and passed the next year. The offer was characteristic of the moderation with which Mr Gladstone handled the

[1] 13th June 1884.

whole situation. There was not lacking a quantity of strong feeling against the House of Lords which might, if he had chosen, have been worked into passion. Indeed, the summer and autumn saw some very downright meetings in the country—in Chatsworth Park, at Leicester and Manchester especially—and some violent ones; there was a regular riot at Bournemouth at the end of July, and another at Birmingham in October, when Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Randolph Churchill were refused a hearing, and their platform was stormed after a free fight. A Democratic Committee for the Abolition of the House of Lords was established in London, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr Labouchere, Professor Beesly and Mr Bradlaugh at its head—and it absorbed no doubt an earlier body quaintly named "The Society for Removing Bishops from the House of Lords." But all this feeling did not in the least hustle Mr Gladstone out of his chosen path. He had set his mind on carrying his Bill, and he did not intend to have it swamped in a general campaign between the two Houses, or a general test of the constitutional privileges of the Peers. The Tories were not in a strong position; whatever may have been their real dislike of the new franchise they had paid too much lip-service to it to confront easily the indignation the Peers had roused. "The Conservatives," Mr Goschen wrote about this time, "never pronounce against the Franchise; they have never had a meeting against it; never spoken except as regards the time of yielding."[1] Moreover Mr Gladstone had a valuable ally in Queen Victoria, who, dreading as she always did the Radical element in the Cabinet, was only too ready to assist Mr Gladstone in any course alternative to a wholesale attack upon the House of Lords. She feared above all things the attitude expressed by a most interesting new recruit of the Ministerial benches in the House of Commons, Mr John

[1] Elliot's *Life of Lord Goschen*, i. 277.

Morley,[1] who had said to a political audience: "Be sure that no power on earth can henceforth separate the question of mending the Commons from the other question of ending or mending the House of Lords."[2] The Queen's influence was active throughout the months of recess, and Mr Gladstone made handsome acknowledgment of its patient and prosperous application.[3]

A session which had opened with the expectation that it would be entirely concerned with Egypt and the Franchise ended by fulfilling that prophecy. Various Bills were discussed; a Merchant Shipping Bill, extending the Employers' Liability Act to shipping, and setting a limit upon insurance of ships and cargo; a London Government Bill, setting up a single Municipality (a Common Council of 240 members to take over the powers of the City Corporation, the Metropolitan Board of Works, the Commissioners of Sewers, the magistrates for Middlesex, Kent and Surrey within the limits, and the Burial Boards and Vestries, reserving only the poor law, education and the police for other control, and enjoining the acquisition by the new body of the undertakings of the gas and water companies); and finally a more curious Bill, designed to relieve the gold shortage by turning the half-sovereign, which suffered more than the sovereign from wear and tear, into a token coin, and making sovereigns the only legal tender on Bills of Exchange. But all three proposals were dropped. A considerable measure, however, was the attempted conversion this year of the National Debt. The scheme was to convert six hundred millions of 3 per cent. stock into $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. stock, by issuing £108 of the new for every £100 of the old. The high price of Consols for so many years justified the belief that the interest was more than the nation need pay, and a lower price would, it was argued,

[1] He had been elected for Newcastle in 1883.

[2] *The Times*, 31st July 1884.

[3] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 138.

have the advantage of making the security more marketable. The conversion scheme was gazetted on 8th August, but did not attain any great success; the public converted about nine and a half millions, and twelve millions which the Government held were also converted, but this was a very small proportion of the total.[1]

It was not altogether a happy year for such an attempt. The stock markets, disturbed by the uncertainty of our foreign relations, and by a heavy selling of Suez Canal shares, were too nervous for experiments. The bank rate had been reduced to 3 per cent., but only by a strictness on the part of the bank in fixing definite occasions for making advances to bill brokers. Trade was slack, except in the woollen industry; an abundance of shipping had depressed freights and checked shipbuilding; railway traffic returns were poor, and a coal strike was threatening in the Midlands. The competition of foreign manufactures was growing with the growing solidity of the German Empire and the growing immigrant population of the United States; the militant Tory spirits in England were divided between abusing foreign imports and abusing the demands of Trade Unionism.[2] The new Bankruptcy Act was a source of some uneasiness; for while working well on the whole, and putting an end to the vicious private compositions with creditors, it was also keeping in existence firms of a somewhat shaky solvency, which shrank from the publicity of the new arrangements. The cotton strike begun in 1883 overshadowed the beginning of 1884. It may even have had some damping effect upon the progress of the Manchester Ship Canal scheme, which came before Parliament in a private Bill this year, and was discussed by a Select Committee of the House of Lords in the spring. The scheme had to meet the opposition of Liverpool, which

[1] *The Times*, 18th October 1884.

[2] *E.g.* Lord Dunraven and Sir E. Beckett (Lord Grimthorpe) in *The Times*, 4th November 1884.

was expressed in the form of anxiety as to the possible effect of the new waterway upon the existing channels of the Mersey. The Bill passed its second reading in the Commons; but came to grief in the general abandonment of legislation during the Franchise controversy; though the determination of Manchester in the matter was seen in the decision, taken later in the year, to promote another Bill in the following session.

Manchester figured also in a remarkable controversy which arose in the early autumn. It was said that the corporation wished to undertake the management of a hotel in the city. The truth at the back of the story was that a hotel built on some land leased from the corporation had been suddenly thrown on the corporation's hands by the financial failure of the lessee, before its completion; and, rather than leave the place idle, a licencee had been put in as the corporation's tenant. Birmingham had, however, attempted before this to obtain the leave of Parliament to carry on the business of a licensed victualler, so that it was natural to suppose that Manchester was on the same track. The controversy on the subject, which was raised by a licensed victuallers' organisation, is chiefly interesting because it revealed no intellectual objection to municipal trading, as such; the only argument was that to include hotel-keeping was going rather far. Meanwhile the enormous impulse given to municipal affairs by the new power to issue stock may be judged from a report published early in 1884 of the towns which had already obtained the power [1]; they numbered no less than twenty-seven, and the amount of authorised municipal stock had gone up from five and a quarter millions to about seventy-five millions. The local government debt of the country at this time was already over a hundred millions.

In the region of social reform the year is notable for the appointment of the Royal Commission on the Housing

[1] *The Times*, 18th January 1884.

of the Poor, which was gazetted on 4th March. The presence on the Commission of the Prince of Wales as chairman expressed strikingly the degree to which the general national conscience was aroused on the subject. The housing conditions in London were most prominently discussed (in January the Local Government Board had sent round a circular to the local authorities of London, pointing out their powers and duties under various Acts, as to the inspection of houses, the abatement of nuisances, and the demolition of unsuitable dwellings); but the public was well aware that sanitary conditions in country places were exceedingly bad. Some committees of private people in the richer parts of London had been investigating conditions in such districts as Southwark; so that in every way the commission came at a time likely to render it fruitful. It coincided with an event which, if as much designed for pleasure as for business, was likely in a small way to be of some assistance, the Health Exhibition, the successor to the Fisheries Exhibition of the previous year. Conferences on sanitary matters were held in connection with the exhibition; and both to them and to the housing question a renewed alarm of cholera gave great importance. The first anxiety arose from a case discovered at Port Said on board a homeward-bound troopship in April; at the end of June the disease appeared at Toulon, and spread to Marseilles, to Spain and to Italy; it continued to ravage the south of Europe almost until the winter set in. The precautions taken in England still followed the principle of improved sanitation, cleanliness, etc.; and out of this attitude grew the sharp attacks made in this year on the Duke of Bedford on account of the shameful condition of Covent Garden Market, where vegetables lay about rotting, and no standard of cleanliness had ever been enforced. "Mud-Salad Market" was the name *Punch* gave to it at this time. A somewhat odder, and yet no less lasting, result of the Health Exhibition was the sudden impulsion

it gave to the consideration of healthy clothing. From this year dates the rise of Dr Jaeger's teachings in England; and *The Times* somewhat rashly committed itself to the assertion that Englishmen would not be ashamed of wearing a comfortable coat because it was ugly.[1] But healthiness does not necessitate the colours in clothing which the enthusiasts adopted; and they remained, therefore, when the first ardour of the movement waned, a somewhat conspicuous snuff-brown band. The ordinary man had not as a whole displayed much interest in the sanitary conferences of the Health Exhibition; but it was some consolation to record that by its means he had learned again to walk in gardens of an evening and listen to a band. Indeed the ordinary man's pursuit of health was opening up everywhere fresh avenues. Cycling was giving access to country places, and the National Cyclists' Union and the Cyclists' Touring Club were in their second year of existence. Swimming was much in vogue, and the Beckwiths' entertainment had for a season or two been one of the most popular in London; it was announced in the summer of 1884 that Miss Beckwith was going to attempt to swim the Channel. The family visit to the seaside in the summer had ceased by now to be a subject for superior jokes; and *Punch's* butt had become the Cockney tourist at "Bullong." However, Boulogne had no objection to receiving him, and was in this year dredging its harbour to allow of a fixed-hour steamship service across the Channel, Lord Radnor at the same time being approached for foreshore rights for a corresponding deep-sea harbour at Folkestone.

At a great demonstration in July against the House of Lords, after the rejection of the Franchise Bill, there was a small group which, while joining in the demonstration, preferred to have its own platform. It was a group of socialists, and it attracted little attention until a speaker

[1] 4th October 1884.

referred contemptuously to John Bright (who had been roused to battle again by the action of the Peers); whereupon the group was broken up by wrathful bystanders. Yet though socialism was as yet contemptible to the London populace it was already giving rise to some anxiety. Henry George was lecturing in London in January of 1884 on Land Nationalisation; and the frequent references to him, spiteful or humorous, in newspapers and comic prints throughout the year give some measure of the great impression he had made. His theories coloured the whole of the Radical programme. The first number of a new socialist paper, *Justice*, was published on 9th January 1884.

Meanwhile middle-class attempts to do what was just by the poor and the oppressed were increasing. There was some inclination to perceive the rise of a "new Radicalism," humanitarian and courageous, but distinctly inclined to interference; trade unions were warned that it was not wise to invoke too much State interference. But this was a misreading of the signs. The fault of the trade unions was rather, as Mr Chamberlain saw, a more marked tendency to exclude politics from their sphere of work. In a letter to a correspondent published early in the year Mr Chamberlain deplored this tendency, as "a practical abnegation of the most vital interests of the working classes." There is in this an interesting indication that the disjunction of official Liberalism from the main current of social change was causing some anxiety to Radical leaders. But the latter had no opportunity of keeping their minds with any continuity upon a restoration of understanding. They missed such chances as were offered them, for instance, by the prolonged discussion of the condition of the Friendly Soeieties, some of which were not financially above suspicion; they did not see in the earnest work of the societies' most prominent critic, Canon Blackley, the nucleus of a scheme of national insurance for workmen. They missed even such chances of action in the

socialist direction as were offered by the middle-class themselves; the railway companies, exhausted by competition, were tentatively expressing, through some of their chairmen, the opinion that increased control by the Board of Trade would not be unwelcome, if it would limit the competition. The Government had, in fact, come to office with an imperfect appreciation of the spirit of advanced sections of the community, and it never had leisure to obtain a clearer view. Meanwhile the sense of the increased power of the working classes in the community, their improved economic and, consequently, civic weight, so to speak, is shown by a certain tendency to call in question the whole basis of taxation. It was urged that the corollary of all the efforts being made for a social amelioration should be a greater union in responsibility; and the debates on the County Franchise Bill were accompanied by the criticism that we were multiplying the voters without increasing the number of taxpayers. Hence arose the plea that there should be less reliance on indirect taxation; the days had passed when we "drank ourselves out of the Alabama indemnity"; and that there should be no exceptions from direct taxation. Another idea was that the Income Tax should be abolished, and money raised by stamps on every sale of goods. However, social ideas of any kind failed to penetrate into the rather narrow circle of the politicians' outlook, and remained in the region of private effort, where the benevolent spirit was more active than the critical. New ideas, for instance, in connection with elementary education showed to what astonishing lengths the departure from the old individualism was proceeding. Thoughtful people had begun to perceive in the elementary schools not mere machines for giving knowledge, after the operation of which children must sink or survive, as they could, but also fresh opportunities for dealing with poverty and the inadequacies of poor homes. Thus we find a New Education Code showing

signs of an inclination to lay less stress on examination results, and more on a classification of children with proper regard to their health, and at the same time a movement of private philanthropy for providing the children of the very poor with decent clothing and with cheap meals at school. Compulsory education was having its indirect effect in bringing to the light of day children whose lack of clothing and nourishment would otherwise have been concealed in the swarming courts of town slums. It is curious to find that an early difficulty in the way of feeding children was the distrust they showed of such food as macaroni, lentils, haricot beans, and even of soup[1]; so strong remained the British feeling that only meat made a meal, even among those who could hardly ever have meat. The fact that other forms of food were being used in this work may be an indication that the more well-to-do people were becoming aware of that narrowness of range in catering which was remarked a year or two earlier. The limitation of the meat supply by the embargo on imported cattle was still very great; but the chilled meat trade was steadily advancing. The largest cargo yet landed in England arrived on 26th September in a shipment of 22,000 carcasses, and 1000 pieces of beef, from New Zealand; cold storage warehouses had been constructed under Cannon Street Railway Station in order to handle large consignments. It was fortunate that the leaders of this enterprise were persistent, for the impossibility under the existing regulations of moving live cattle was leading to some atrocious experiments in conserving dead meat; thus a system had been devised of injecting boracic acid into an animal before killing it, the circulation of the blood conveying the preservative over the body; and other experiments were made with carbonic acid.[2] The new inventions which had so enlivened the past three or four years were

[1] *The Times*, 13th December 1884.
[2] Ditto, 31st January and 26th July 1884.

in 1884 a little at a standstill. Electric lighting had not yet reached the stage of central supply stations, and to install it still meant buying a complete producing plant. The slowness of development was put down in some measure to the provisions of the Electric Lighting Act; it was beginning to be felt that empowering local authorities to purchase lighting undertakings at the end of twenty-one years was rather too drastic, since the companies could not expect to cut out the gas companies with such speed as to recoup themselves within that period. In electric traction the year witnessed a distinct change of method. The "live rail" was replaced by the first practical "feed" system for street use, the employment of a sunk conduit carrying the current rail. It was tried at Blackpool, and with no small success. But it was expensive, and so many other experiments were being made in America that most of the tramway companies preferred to hold their hands for the present.

The opening of the new University College for Wales in September carried on the advance of provincial university education. About the same time the question of over-pressure in girls' schools, which had become a somewhat heated item in a general discussion of the emancipation of women and their entry into occupations hitherto exclusively masculine, came up again in the form of a report by Dr Crichton Browne. The report was considered somewhat rhetorical, and weak in evidence, and likely therefore to put an end to genuine discussion.

Autumn brought an unprecedented return of life to London. Instead of an adjourned session, such as had previously been the means of finishing a heavy year's work, the Government opened a new session in November. The reason, of course, was that the Franchise Bill, having been rejected by the Lords, could only reappear in a new session, and as a Redistribution Bill was ahead it was necessary to take at once the chances of a new attempt with the

Franchise Bill—chances which the Queen's influence had, as we have said, rendered much brighter. The great world made the best of the business, decided to have an autumn season, and to amuse itself in London until Christmas—a thing it had never done before. In any case, the relations between the two Houses were exciting enough to make hostesses sure of vivacious dinner-tables and gossipy evening parties. The Tadpoles and Tapers came back to town discussing the propriety or otherwise of a creation of peers to pass the Bill, a course Mr Gladstone preferred to avoid [1]; and meanwhile two men from the opposing sides who could hardly have been better chosen—Lord Hartington and Sir Michael Hicks Beach—were parleying on possible means of adjustment. Outwardly there was to the last minute uncertainty as to the attitude of the House of Lords, Lord Salisbury still demanding the actual production of the Redistribution Bill before he would undertake to pass the Franchise Bill. But on 18th November the crisis was passed. The Franchise Bill was read a second time in the Lords, the committee stage being postponed for the Tory leaders to see in private the Redistribution Bill. All went well; on 27th November the Franchise Bill passed its committee stage; the Redistribution Bill was introduced in the Commons on 2nd December, and on the 6th Parliament adjourned until the following February. The Redistribution Bill, discussed as it had been in private between leaders of the two parties, promised an easy passage; but it, like the other Bill, raised at the outset a kind of corollary discussion. The advocates of Proportional Representation saw their opportunity, just as the advocates of Woman Suffrage had seen theirs, and held meetings in December to commend their views to the electorate. But they did not succeed in persuading Mr Gladstone; and Mr Courtney, the chief advocate of the new idea, resigned his post in the Government.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 130.

The Redistribution Bill, in order to bring about the proper digestion of a large accession of voters, had to readjust drastically the electoral areas. Boroughs of less than 15,000 inhabitants were disfranchised, and thrown into county constituencies, to balance the new rural vote. Towns with a population of less than 50,000 were to have only one member; and in general, save for the very large towns, the constituencies were all to be single-member areas. By these means 160 seats were set free, to be allotted to the new constituencies produced by the re-division of the county areas.

Mr Gladstone had steered his Bills through after his own fashion. Only the boldest members of the party ventured to remark that he had done exactly what he said he would not do; he had let the Lords see the Redistribution Bill as a condition of passing the Franchise Bill. So unquestioned was his supremacy that his party accepted what he had done; indeed, they hardly realised it. But the true Radicals in after years put down to Mr Gladstone's action on this occasion the confidence with which the House of Lords rejected Liberal Bills. No other business had occupied Parliament, though there was at this time some discussion of our naval strength, and a demand for extensive building of torpedo boats. This class of boat, with its swiftness and deadliness of attack, was at the moment the idol of a navy which only four years before had seen the disappearance from the active list of the last of the wooden armour-clads.

Yet even the political excitement about the Franchise Bill could not conceal the more general anxiety about Gordon. In September news of gloomy omen had come. Colonel Stewart, Gordon's companion in Khartoum, on whose cool judgment the British authorities in Cairo had relied much in their bewilderment about Gordon himself, left Khartoum on 10th September, with some other Englishmen, in an attempt to reach Lower Egypt by way

of the Nile. Their steamer was wrecked sixty miles below Abu Hamed, and Stewart and his companions, having been lured into a village, were murdered there. After this another long silence ensued. Wolseley was making his way up the Nile, but was not ready until December for the move across the desert from Korti. There he divided his force into two columns, one under Sir Herbert Stewart starting to take the desert route, and the other under General Earle to take the Nile route. On the day that Herbert Stewart set out a message arrived from Gordon, on a scrap of paper about the size of a postage stamp: "Khartoum all right. 14. 12. 84. C. G. GORDON." A verbal message accompanied it to the effect that Khartoum was in great straits. But at least Gordon was still alive, relief was approaching him, and the year ended in good hope.

CHAPTER VII

1885: THE DEATH OF GORDON, THE GENERAL ELECTION, AND THE RISE OF SOCIALISM

IT was a remarkable stroke of Fate which placed the Government at the beginning of 1885 in the position of not having to "meet Parliament." As the session had been opened in November, and only adjourned over Christmas, the reassembling in 1885 was not accompanied with the formalities of a Speech from the Throne, an Address in either House, and a general engagement of forces. On the contrary, there was at the critical moment all the natural instinct of the politician to carry through a large piece of half-finished work; and, as the holding-over of the important stages of the Redistribution Bill provided that condition, the Government did not actually have to go to the country until the popular mind had undergone no slight change from a temper on the subject of Gordon, which would beyond a doubt have wrecked the Liberal party at the beginning of the year.

The first news of the year from the Soudan was cheering. On 16th January it was announced in London that Herbert Stewart had reached Metemmeh, and on the 22nd the papers had the news of the battle of Abu Klea. The story of the fight was one to soothe ruffled popular pride; the British square had been broken in the battle, but by sheer fighting courage, sheer pluck, the troops had restored their formation, and it was reported that when the enemy had drawn off 1100 of their dead had been counted on the field. Nevertheless the battle cost the life of one who was a hero of adventure, Colonel Burnaby. The next piece of news was a blow. Herbert Stewart

himself had been shot on 18th January, while his force was advancing through bush the day after the battle, and his wound was grave. But the force pushed on, and on 21st January reached the Nile at Gubat. Here it met four steamers, the river fleet which Gordon had had at Khartoum, and with them was one more tiny scrap of paper. It bore the words: "Khartoum is all right. Could hold out for years. C. G. GORDON. 29. 12. 84." The decision to use the steamers for a hasty advance to Khartoum was instantly taken, but Sir Charles Wilson, who had succeeded Herbert Stewart in command, ordered certain reconnaissances to be made before they moved. They actually started up the Nile again on 24th January.

On 6th February England had the news that Khartoum had fallen, and the relief force had been too late. In official quarters it had been known twenty-four hours earlier. Sir Charles Wilson's little advance force, steaming up the Nile, had come in sight of Khartoum, and simultaneously under heavy firing from the river-sides, on 28th January. Their eyes searched for the flag that should have been flying. A man had shouted from the bank on the previous day that Khartoum had fallen, and Gordon was killed. The flag was not there. After satisfying himself by other observations that Khartoum was wholly in the Mahdi's hands Sir Charles Wilson turned his steamers and went downstream. For a few days England refused to believe the worst; rumours about Gordon were rife among the natives around Wolseley's camp at Korti, and for ten days England remained in suspense. Then on 16th February was published a telegram from Wolseley, saying that Gordon had been killed. Just before sunrise on 26th January, with the steamers so close at hand, he had faced at the entrance to his residence the spears of the Mahdi's horde, and died as fearlessly as he had lived.

The angry excitement in England was intense. From the Queen herself, who sent her Ministers a sharp telegram of rebuke without observing the ordinary custom of putting the message in cypher,[1] down to the humblest of her subjects, the outcry against Mr Gladstone and his Government arose. Gordon had indeed become almost a figure of legend in the popular mind; men told how he had gone through the whole of the campaign of the Ever-Victorious Army in China with no weapon but a cane, how little he had cared for danger in his earlier days in the Soudan. His religious fervour, his disregard for himself, his missionary enthusiasm, all contributed to produce a kind of idealisation of him against which no amount of knowledge of the inner history of his last mission could have prevailed. Be this at least said to the honour of those most bitterly attacked on account of his death—that no word was uttered by them to destroy the character which the prevalent hero-worship built up. It is true that no contrary word would have been likely to carry weight; but the many that might have been said in heat or exasperation by those who were now held responsible were left unsaid.

In the nation's hour of bitterness the news published on 21st February that Herbert Stewart had died of his wound was a real additional grief. Gallant, frank and sweet-natured, he was in the opinion of many the finest soldier of them all. Parliament had just met again; and in spite of its not meeting with the usual discussion of the Government's work in a debate on an Address, it could not of course proceed far without an opportunity for arraigning Ministers. On 27th February a Vote of Censure was moved, and was only defeated by 302 votes to 288. The Government had to face a double disaffection among its followers, the greater one contained in the reason for the motion of censure, and a lesser one arising from the hostility of one group of Liberals to the announced policy of not allowing

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 167.

the Mahdi to hold Khartoum. The latter led to a number of abstentions from the division. But, as we have said, the existence of a great piece of work, half-accomplished, tided the Cabinet over the internal dissensions which followed such a vote. It was agreed in the Cabinet that the Redistribution Bill should be carried through. There was also reason to believe that the Conservatives were not at the moment very anxious to come into office, and shoulder the thankless task of taking secondary decisions about the Soudan.[1] Indeed the Conservatives were in no sense in a strong position; the reproaches for the death of Gordon had not been aimed entirely in one direction, and Conservatives were reminded that they had at no period in the past year displayed the possession of any policy of their own which might have helped to guide events; their work of criticism and of extracting from the Ministry at any given moment its intentions had been so ill-done that there was even room for asking, with what would in easier circumstances have been comical bewilderment, whether we were actually at war, and if so, with whom.[2]

For one half of England these were the events that shadowed and embittered the opening of 1885. There was another half which had not at this time heart or strength to look beyond its own urgent need. The winter was full of distress and unemployment. Early in January three or four thousand men in Birmingham presented themselves, orderly, quiet, but near starvation, before the mayor, asking for work. From every great town came a similar cry, and in London the distress was as much greater as the poor streets spread further. Deputations had gone to the Lord Mayor in earlier years, and a few thoughtful people had paid attention to them. Now with the more bitter need came a new and more menacing frame of mind among the men. On 16th February a deputation of unemployed went to the Local Government Board, where

[1] *The Times*, 2nd March 1885. [2] Ditto, 14th February 1885.

they were received by Mr George Russell, the Parliamentary Secretary. He could make them no more than an official reply; the problem they represented could hardly be said officially to have any existence. That fact was, to the men concerned, the heart of their reproach; and this was what they meant when they asserted at the end of their fruitless visit that the Board and the Government would be responsible for the deaths that destitution would bring in the next few weeks. "Responsible for murder" was the exaggerated phrase they used; but they saw strong and willing men being pushed out of life, and if it were not a deliberate process, such as might fairly be called murder, then the sooner someone began to deliberate about it the better. As the men left the Local Government Board they distributed a manifesto fiercely worded against a Government which had acknowledged its helplessness; the manifesto bore the names of John Burns, J. E. Williams, William Henry, and James Macdonald. Round the corner in Downing Street they held a defiant meeting before the police had gathered force to stop them, and a man spoke hanging to the cross-bar of a lamp-post. We may picture him there—the first portent of a series of troubled years.

The problem of the unemployed had, we have remarked, no official existence. Yet at this very moment it came nearer to having one than it was to come again for some years. At the end of January a conference, extraordinary to look back upon, took place in London. It was called the Industrial Remuneration Conference, and it had been rendered possible by an anonymous gift of £1000 for the purpose. The fact is significant of how much the social unrest had begun to impress thoughtful people, however little appearance it made on the surface of things. The proceedings of the conference are a most interesting index of the state of sociological opinion at the time of the dissolution of the old individualism. The intellectuals of

the official and political world met face to face the teachers of socialism, and those leaders of the trade unions who were introducing profound changes into the theory of trade combination. Sir Charles Dilke presided over the meeting. Lord Bramwell read a paper against socialism; Mr Bernard Shaw joyously defended a thesis that the landlord, the capitalist and the burglar were equally damaging to the community. Mr Arthur Balfour criticised Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*; Mr Shaw Lefevre spoke of the English land system as "relics of feudalism" which should be swept away; Mr Williams, of the Social Democratic Federation, retorted that when Mr Chamberlain spoke of nationalising the land, but avoided saying anything about manufactures, he was but an "Artful Dodger." Mr John Morley, with a watchful eye upon the proceedings of the Fair Trade League, warned the Conference of the fallacies of the Imperial Zollverein school, and of the hopelessness of expecting any colony to give up its tariff. In the less controversial hours of the conference the Rev. H. Solly preached the doctrine, more familiar to our day than to his, of avoiding congestion of labour by the institution of industrial villages; and Mr John Burns, with no little common-sense, pointed out how much the principle of socialism was already embodied in the normal activity of great and advanced municipalities.

There was leaven enough here, and some of it seemed to be already at work in the community. Mr Shaw Lefevre's references to the land had this additional point—that he had been Chairman of a Departmental Committee which had reported in the middle of January in favour of an allotment system for labourers; and Mr Jesse Collings was at the height of his advocacy of small holdings, while Mr Chamberlain was making speeches which were thought to point not obscurely to a special taxation of landed property such as might advance a break-up of big estates.[1] Again

[1] *The Times*, 5th February 1885.

the hostility visible on one side of the conference to the middleman and the capitalist had its practical counterpart in the advancing work of the co-operative movement. It was already including both production and distribution, though it was more engaged in the latter. Mr Burns's reference to municipalities was also full of significance. The opinion of the social reformers of the period that "the era of administration had come" issued in January 1885 in the formation of the Fabian Society, whose principle was the advancement of socialistic ideals at every opportunity afforded by the existing machinery of the State, in contradistinction to those socialists who wished to begin by recreating the machinery. Mr Bernard Shaw had appeared at the Industrial Remuneration Conference as a representative of this new society. The Fabians based their hopes mainly on Local Government. The great municipalities had at the moment not much further to expand; the chief project of the year, that of Manchester's water-supply from Thirlmere, had been really settled when parliamentary powers for the work had been obtained in 1879, though six years had intervened before the Water Committee of the Council resolved to commence the undertaking. But the lesser municipalities might still be aroused; and in any case there remained the prospect of reorganisation of county government, which was still an unfulfilled promise.

Once again, just when a domestic problem had gathered force and impetus which might have moved Parliament, an urgent distraction intervened, and again it was a bequest of "Beaconsfieldism." It came this time from Afghanistan. Russia, advancing her possessions in Central Asia, had annexed Turcoman territory; and the necessary consequence had been a commission to delimit the frontier between that territory and Afghanistan. The British relations with the Ameer were such that the commission consisted of British and Russian diplomats. While they

were at work Russian troops came into conflict with Afghan troops at Penjdeh, routed them after a heavy fight, and occupied the place. On this question Mr Gladstone showed none of the lack of interest which had been so fatal in Egypt. Partly, no doubt, this was due to the detached sharpness of the incident; there was no ambiguity as to England's position. But at the same time, however serious the matter was at the moment, however anxious the diplomatic problem, the fact remains that the Penjdeh incident could be looked back upon afterwards as "a perfect godsend" from a Liberal politician's point of view.[1] England was so much roused that a vote of credit was passed with no difficulty, the reserves were called out, and every eye was turned upon the possibility of war with Russia. Mr Gladstone, seizing the opportunity to deplore a distraction of our forces, was able to abandon quietly the whole of the Khartoum problem, and in addition to meet the remaining costs of the Soudan expedition, amounting to four and a half millions, out of a vote of credit already obtained, instead of having to move a separate vote and thereby definitely raise the question of abandoning Khartoum. Thus Mr Gladstone achieved the feat of satisfying at one and the same time the Radicals, by removing the possibility of more bloodshed in Egypt, and the Whigs, by opposing Russian aggression. The result rewarded his admirable party skill. The Russian menace subsided, and by the beginning of May an agreement had been reached which removed all danger. Wolseley was ordered home from Dongola, the decision was taken to establish the Egyptian frontier at Wady Halfa, and the hot fit in England passed as opportunely as in one sense it had arisen. Baring's despatches from Egypt were to the effect that, while he could not pretend to agree in all the decisions that had been taken, he was sure that the general lines of the Government's policy were perfectly practicable, and

[1] Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, ii. 31.

would, if persevered in, lead to success. On 30th June the Mahdi died, and his place in the Soudan was taken by the Khalifa.

A minor interest brought out by the return of the troops was the fact that, for the first time, colonial troops joined the British regular forces in an affair in which their colony was not directly concerned, and took, as it were, Imperial status. An Australian contingent had been landed at Suakin, and had taken part in operations under Sir Gerald Graham. With this development of colonial spirit may be linked a speech made by Mr Goschen at Manchester in February, which marks the beginning of the most striking change of our time in the hierarchy of Government departments. He pointed out that colonising, both by the British and by other nations, had now spread so widely that in every part of the world Britain had civilised neighbours; therefore statesmanship, which had never found a home at the Colonial Office, would have to be brought to bear upon our colonial relations and upon the foreign relations springing out of them. For the moment this pronouncement lost its value amid the difficulties of the year, but it deserves to be recorded in its place.

The Government appeared now to have ridden out another storm. But the Cabinet was working uncomfortably; Mr Chamberlain was making speeches which his less Radical colleagues disliked; coercion was holding Ireland down; and the question of relieving its severity and at the same time introducing some measure of local self-government was a constant source of friction amongst Ministers. On 8th June the Government fell, being defeated on an amendment to the second reading of the Budget, dealing with the proposed increase of the beer duty. It was common knowledge that the Government Whips had deliberately permitted the defeat. Mr Gladstone resigned. His action has a place in

constitutional history, since it had not hitherto been customary for defeat on a minor point to involve resignation, while a government had a majority for its general policy.[1] But on the other hand the smallness of the majority on the Vote of Censure would have been sufficient cause for a change of government, if the desire to pass the Redistribution Bill had not operated. The step that was now taken caused some difficulty. A dissolution of Parliament was impossible until both the new franchise and the new distribution of seats were in operation; and it became necessary therefore for Lord Salisbury to consider taking office without a majority in the Commons. Not unnaturally he began by stipulating for a promise of support from the outgoing Liberals. In the end he took office without any definite promise, but with an understanding that necessary matters, such as supply, would not be contested. Yet the brief remainder of the life of this Parliament was not to be devoid of interest or importance. Now that the party balance was again in question the Irish vote recovered that power of swaying the scales, which since 1882 it had largely ceased to possess. For some time coercion, which at the period of the Phœnix Park murders had been restored without compunction, had been afflicting Radical consciences; though the revival of dynamite outrages had blurred sensitiveness on the subject. Those outrages had not ceased. At the very beginning of January 1885 there was another explosion on the Underground Railway, this time between Gower Street and King's Cross stations; only slight personal injuries resulted. On 24th January there was another group of simultaneous explosions, such as the previous year had seen, and these were the most notorious explosions of this period of Fenianism. They occurred in Westminster Hall, in the House of Commons itself, and in the White Tower

[1] See an article on English Public Life in *The Edinburgh Review*, July 1911.

of the Tower of London. In Westminster Hall two policemen were very seriously injured, but practically no damage, save to the stone flooring, was inflicted on the building; the concussion had the extraordinary effect of shaking down from the timbers of the roof the dust of ages, and those who entered the hall directly afterwards walked on a thick grey carpet of it. Parliament had not yet met; consequently the explosion in the House of Commons, beyond half-wrecking the seats and galleries, had no result, except the natural alarm at the thought that dynamite could be deposited in a spot normally so well policed. In the Tower of London several people were injured, and damage done by a fire which followed the explosion. Yet when party exigencies required it, politicians did not find that difficulty in keeping their minds clear of a confusion between Fenianism and the Home Rule movement, which they were equally ready on other occasions to indulge. Some of them displayed certainly after the change of government a suppleness which those who were not politicians found unaccountable. The spectacle of Lord Randolph Churchill supporting, and even Sir Michael Hicks Beach regarding benevolently, a motion by Parnell calling attention to Lord Spencer's "maladministration of the law" under the Coercion Act, was bewildering to most, and repugnant to many. Lord Randolph Churchill's reputation stamped his share in the matter as being purely tactical. But what was to be thought of the speech delivered in the House of Lords by the new Viceroy of Ireland, Lord Carnarvon?[1] He had been Governor-General of British colonies, and in his speech he remarked that, as he had seen those communities living in loyal obedience to the law and the Crown, so he could not see at home "any irreconcilable bar to the unity and amity" of English and Irish. It was a hint, rather than a statement; the only positive part of the speech was

[1] *The Times*, 7th July 1885.

its repudiation of coercion. But since it was a speech made by the new Viceroy in the presence of the new Prime Minister (and a speech by a viceroy was in any case so unusual that it had had but two precedents since the Union)[1] no slight interpretation of its meaning could easily be formed. It was not an unfair conclusion that the precedent of the self-governing colonies was in the Ministry's mind. What had the Liberals to set against it? The answer is, a policy of local self-government, for which at this moment Mr Chamberlain stood most prominently. He was taking a strong line, and in June 1885, just after the defeat of Mr Gladstone's Ministry, had shown his sense of the suddenly restored importance of the Irish vote by making the famous speech in which he compared the existing rule of Ireland to the rule of oppressed Poland; an Irishman "could not move without an official controlling him." At the same time his policy amounted not to a separate government for Ireland, but only to a system of local councils, under a central board in Dublin. Even that degree of Irish independence had not been accepted by most of his colleagues; and meanwhile on the Conservative side Lord Randolph Churchill's fair words to Ireland were so much disliked that at a great meeting at Liverpool, which he addressed at the end of July, the two members for the constituency in which he spoke took the serious step of declining to appear on the platform. The Irish party was thus confronted with a situation in which two conciliatory policies were being expressed, but neither with such authority that it could be definitely selected at the expense of the other. Strong as Lord Carnarvon's speech had been, it could not be used to pin the new Government down. As soon as Liberals began to formulate the idea that between Lord Salisbury, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Parnell there was an understanding as to the support of the Irish vote, it was seen that

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 211.

nothing had happened to render impossible a flat denial of any such understanding.[1]

A summer of most unusual heat interrupted political warfare. The thermometer more than once reached 90° in the shade; and trade, which had begun the year somewhat slackly, had no chance of recovery when the heat combined with the collapse of the session to send people at an early date out of town. The sight of the unemployed at the beginning of the year had given some measure of the commercial conditions. There were those among business men who thought that one cause of weakness was that means of production had outstripped means of distribution; this was a Lancashire view. Trade was bad not only in England, but all over the world, largely because of the appreciation of gold; and at the same time, although capital was cheap, there was little encouragement towards speculation.[2] A Royal Commission on Trade had been asked for, and was believed to be in process of formation; but its actual appearance was delayed, and many people felt that after all, with the various nostrums then in the market—Bimetallism, Fair Trade, and the repeal of the Bank Act, for example—a commission might be but a hotbed for faddists. Its best work would probably lie in inquiring into the relations between British traders and foreign customers, and into the possibility of more assistance to those relations from the Foreign Office. Meanwhile so much change was beginning in the banking world that it seems to be fair to conclude that the struggle of trade with enlarged competition and narrowed coinage supply was leading to a reconsideration of the principles of banking. In 1885 Glyn, Mills, Currie & Co. decided to register themselves under the Companies Acts (though not with limited liability), and so undertake the statutory duty of publishing a balance sheet; this was thought to be

[1] See *The Times*, 8th and 10th August 1885.

[2] See a speech by Mr Goschen, *The Times*, 24th June 1885.

a good example for private banks to follow. An equally important change is seen in the commencement about this time of the absorption of small banks into larger combinations; the Capital and Counties Bank took over the Gloucestershire Banking Company in 1885; and there had previously been one or two amalgamations in the Birmingham district. The relief of the gold supply had not yet begun, though the progress of events in the Transvaal is marked by the description of the new "slimes" process for dealing with gold from deep levels.[1]

Early in the summer the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor issued a first interim report. It recommended for the time being a more active enforcement of the existing law; but it proposed also the purchase of three prison sites—those of Coldbath Fields, Pentonville and Millbank—and setting them free for housing purposes by demolishing the prisons. That at Coldbath Fields was already out of use, and Millbank was shortly to be abandoned as a place of detention. A Bill to forward these recommendations was passed by Parliament after the change of Government. It also strengthened and made applicable to the whole country certain powers of the Local Government Board hitherto confined to London, and contained a provision that anyone letting a house to a tenant without taking reasonable precautions for the health of the inmates would be liable for any death due to his negligence. A more remarkable provision (especially as events had placed the Bill in Tory hands) was a stipulation that the two prison sites which it had been decided to take over should not be taken at their market value; this was regarded as a step towards State socialism.[2] Still more curious in the mouth of Lord Salisbury, who moved the second reading of the Bill in the House of Lords, was a clause deciding that the price of land

[1] *The Times*, 12th August 1885.
[2] Ditto, 17th July 1885.

for housing purposes was not to be the best that could be got, but the best that in all the circumstances could reasonably be obtained. So easy a thing was the Fair Rent principle when its field of operation was not Ireland! Oddly enough, there was less comment on the clause empowering the Local Government Board to set Housing Acts in operation, a duty hitherto left to local authorities.

Society lost in this year two or three notable figures. Lord Houghton died in August with one of the most famous and most charming of death-bed sayings on his lips: "Yes, I am going to join the majority, and, you know, I have always preferred minorities." Both the charm and the truth of the saying were characteristic of him; he was never prone to take the facile view of things; and under his typically English appearance there lay an essentially un-English nature, alike in his ease of manner and in his wide tolerance. At the beginning of October died Lord Shaftesbury, a man whose natural goodness directed him, as perhaps natural goodness seldom does, into the very paths where he could most fulfil himself. He was proud, somewhat intolerant of opposition, unyielding in principle, and for those reasons unlikely to have made his life successful in the normal paths of office; but, diverted by his passionate sympathy and eager mind into philanthropic paths, he found every quality he had work together for good.[1] He died before he had seriously to measure his zeal for doing what he thought right by the working poor against the working men's new inclination to judge what they themselves thought to be their due from the community. But his advocacy of the Factory Laws had been the first assault upon individualism—an assault made much more effective by the support of his great name. A person socially less lofty, but none the less a real figure of the

[1] For the characters of Lord Houghton and Lord Shaftesbury see Mr G. W. E. Russell's *Collections and Recollections*, chapters iii. and v.

London world, was Sir Moses Montefiore, who died in July, well past his hundredth year; he was associated with the Rothschilds, and had been the second Jewish sheriff of London, just after the days of Emancipation.

Of material progress the year offers little to record. The Manchester Ship Canal Bill at last was law, after having had to be promoted three times. The enormous cost of these preliminary stages raised the whole question of the oppressiveness of private bill procedure, and the futility of a separate inquiry before a committee of each House; but the criticism died down in the face of more stirring parliamentary events. Before the end of the year it was said that the project had already reduced railway freights between Manchester and Liverpool from 9s. 2d. a ton to 8s. a ton.[1] Naval experts were excited by the trials of the first submersible boat. It had been invented by Nordenfeldt, the gunmaker, and it was sixty-four feet long, constructed of steel plates varying from five-eighths of an inch in thickness at the centre to three-eighths of an inch at the ends. It was submerged partly by filling water-tanks and partly by the action of vertical propellers, and when under water its fire-box was sealed, and pressure was obtained from tanks previously heated. Its best performance was staying down for six hours with a crew of four men.[2] The invention gave fresh point to the advocacy of liquid fuel for the navy, which Admiral Selwyn started this year. But a steam submarine was not a very practicable machine, and the idea made no real advances till electricity had become much more potent. A new electric locomotive made its appearance in November, the fresh principle being a revolving motor rendering belt transmission unnecessary, which was one more step toward electric trams. Meanwhile the steam tram at last invaded London, and one was running on the North

[1] *The Times*, 30th October 1885.
[2] Ditto, 1st October 1885.

Metropolitan lines. A strange new method of propelling vehicles must be modestly recorded at this point. A Mr Butler constructed a vehicle, in the form of a tricycle, which was driven by an internal combustion engine. Ever since the days of Trevethick's steam carriage, in 1802, mechanical propulsion of carriages had interested inventors. Against a dead weight of opposition they pursued their schemes, and for heavy haulage steam traction engines had long been in use, under the strict limitations of the Act of 1865, which forbade a speed of more than four miles an hour, and enjoined that every such vehicle must be preceded by a man carrying a red flag. Even this discouragement did not wholly extinguish invention, and in 1881 an attempt, though a vain one, had been made to prove that the Act did not apply to a steam tricycle. Mr Butler's was a completely fresh start. He applied to his machine the principle of exploding vapour—benzoline vapour was the one he used—inside the piston cylinder by means of an electric spark. At the same time Gottlieb Daimler in France was applying the same principle, but using petroleum spirit to provide the vapour.[1] As far as England is concerned the subject has to be left for the present, with Mr Butler's isolated idea useless in face of the Act of 1865, and commercially still-born.

The demand for sixpenny telegrams had been acceded to,[2] but the details required no little arrangement, since under the old minimum of a shilling the names and addresses of the receiver and the sender had been transmitted free of charge, and the Post Office declined to continue this practice with a sixpenny minimum. This year also saw the completion of the Revised Version of the Bible, the version of the Old Testament having been finished on 1st May, after fifteen years' work. The New Testament version had been finished and published two or three years

[1] See the article on Motors in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

[2] The new system came into force on 1st October 1885.

earlier. The Church of England was at present in smoother water, and the Ritual controversy had largely declined. Evangelicalism, indeed, had not weakened ; for a year or two earlier the Church Army had been founded (it held its first large annual meeting on 28th May 1884) to take up in the streets and byways the same kind of work as the Salvation Army was doing. The latter still met with strong opposition ; dragoons had to be called out to quell a fight between it and the Skeleton Army at Worthing, and there were savage riots at Derby, in which stones flew and the band instruments were used as weapons. A somewhat old-fashioned outbreak of morality in this year was the discussion of the nude in art which accompanied the course of the Royal Academy Exhibition in the summer.[1] A more important event in the history of art is that in 1885 was founded the New English Art Club. There had been until now hardly any opportunity for an artist not in accord with the theory and practice of the Royal Academy to set his work before the public. The Grosvenor Gallery had, indeed, attached to itself the Pre-Raphaelite group and the æsthetic movement. But it had no inclination to pass outside the safe financial ground provided by a craze. Meanwhile there had been growing up in England a school of painters, trained for the most part in Paris, whose work, not so mannered as to take the ecstatic fancy of the æsthetic, nor so consciously original as to have a public of its own, like Whistler's, was nevertheless vital and revolutionary enough to fail altogether of entrance to the Academy. The work of this school had been the most notable feature of the Glasgow Exhibition of 1881, and it was high time that it should be seen in London. The New English Art Club gathered genius and talent which has ever since sapped the reputation of the Royal Academy.

In the world of education the year 1885 is significant as showing the first signs of a general acceptance of

[1] *The Times*, 22nd May, and other dates, 1885.

new duties. At a conference in Manchester it was stated with some pride that Owens College was in a position to offer to the working man a choice of three hundred lectures, the cost of which was voluntarily met by Manchester residents. Towards the end of the year the People's Palace scheme took shape, the object again being the provision of advanced education for working men and women; and something of the same sort is to be traced in the movement for making the London University a teaching body, instead of a merely examining body. The year saw also a notable step forward in science, photography being for the first time successfully applied to astronomical purposes. The value of this was promptly seen in the proposal, emanating in the first instance from Dr Gill, Astronomer Royal at the Cape, for international co-operation in a great work of charting the heavens.

The autumn brought with it the uproar of a general election, in which one great issue was obscured by conflicting half-lights. Over the field of politics there were issues enough. Mr Chamberlain's speeches outlined the whole range of the Radical programme, including bankruptcy reform, a reform of the Charity Commission with a view to enlarging the social area of educational endowments, county government reform, free education, cottages and land for labourers, shipping measures, a graduated income tax; and some form of self-government for Ireland, and disestablishment of the Church of England. Mr Gladstone's manifesto was naturally less far-reaching. On his own side critics called it a "rather weak production," and opined that "if it was not that the party are ready to take anything from him, it would fall rather flat." [1] He placed first reform of the procedure of the House of Commons, and on county government reform avoided committing himself to a definite scheme; on the land question he proposed the

[1] Lord Hartington to Mr Goschen: Elliot's *Life of Lord Goschen*, ii. 2.

abolition of entail and a system of freer transfer, adding that he "would rejoice if these or other means in themselves commendable led to a large increase in the owners of the soil"; on disestablishment he spoke oracularly, and seemed to regard it as but a distant possibility; on free education he was careful to point out the disadvantages; on Ireland he expressed himself in favour of the greatest possible extension of self-government consistent with maintenance of the authority of the Crown and Parliament. Of these proposals one—that of county government reform—was as prominent in the programme of the other side. The existing confusion of the spheres of local authorities was extreme, the justices administering some Acts, the local Health Boards others, the Guardians of the Poor and the School Boards still others. Disestablishment had appeared somewhat unexpectedly as a very forcible item in the election; apparently there was some hope that the newly enfranchised might be moved on the subject,[1] and it was at any rate found, as the polling time approached, that nothing more interested the electors. Mr Chamberlain had by this time rather drawn in his horns; he had had an interview with Mr Gladstone at Hawarden on 8th October, and by the end of the month was saying that disestablishment could hardly be dealt with in the coming Parliament. But many candidates were already committed to it, and churchmen were roused in every constituency. Against the general Liberal programme the Tories had not, beyond county government, much positive line of their own. But they made a good fight out of the differences between Mr Gladstone and the advanced Radicals. Lord Randolph Churchill vastly increased his reputation at this sort of warfare, and did not shrink from competing with Mr Chamberlain on his own caucus ground. He became president of the Conservative News Agency, an organisation for supplying caricatures and pamphlets

[1] See, *e.g.*, *The Times*, 11th April 1885.

to candidates in all constituencies, and for supplementing the resources of local newspapers. The mistake of raising the disestablishment question enough to irritate the clergy, and then dropping it enough to discourage Nonconformists, was a notable score for the Tories. It may be added here that the Woman Suffrage movement had been so far forwarded by the opportunities it had received for debate in the House that it had been able to exact after the General Election more precise information of the position occupied by the question in the opinions of the new House. Out of 495 members for England and Wales 253 were in favour of Woman Suffrage and 102 against; of the 72 Scottish members 24 were in favour and 18 against; of the 86 Irish members 25 were in favour and 3 against.

Behind all the electoral conflict was that issue which we have described as obscured by half-lights. The Liberals offered Ireland local government by councils. The Tories made no specific offer; but it was fairly well known that Parnell had spoken of having got "something better" than the Liberal offer.[1] He himself had declared outright for national independence in a speech at Dublin in August 1885; but no one in England supposed the "something better" to amount to this ideal. The final disposal of the Irish vote in English constituencies turned on a matter that involved no revelations. Mr Gladstone in a speech at Edinburgh had spoken of the "dangers of a situation in which either party would be liable to be seduced from the right path by the temptation which might be offered to it by the vote of the Irish members," and exhorted the electors of Great Britain to return one party or the other by a majority which would make it independent of the Irish vote. Some of his followers were dismayed; they expected Parnell instantly to denounce Gladstone as insincere in his promises to Ireland, if he was so anxious for an independent majority. But Parnell still used no language

[1] Barry O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, ii. 137.

but that of attempting to persuade Mr Gladstone to formulate precisely his proposals with regard to Ireland. Mr Gladstone replied with a rather bantering speech, to the effect that he was not in office, and that it did not lie with him to make proposals. This it was that stirred Parnell to fury, and he issued the sharp manifesto by which the Irish vote went to Conservative candidates.

It did not, however, carry the day in Great Britain: the result of the election showed a return of 333 Liberals against 251 Tories. But the pledged Home Rule party, the unquestioning adherents of Parnell, who had been but 35 in 1880, were now a solid block of 86; they had carried every seat in Ireland that was not Conservative. As for the newly enfranchised electorate, analysis showed that the Tory fears had been singularly unfounded, and their opposition to the Franchise Bill, as a piece of party legislation, singularly foolish. Of a county electorate of 2,303,133 voters no less than 1,837,088 had gone to the poll, and of these votes 1,020,774 had been Liberal, and 816,314 Conservative. It was a fair deduction that party divisions ran now to the bottom of English life, and that there was no such class feeling as had made the sweeping results after the Reform Bill of 1832. A minor interest of the election, but one which closes for the time a subject of prominence in the few previous years, was the general defeat of the "Fair Trade" party. Its leader, Mr Ecroyd, had been beaten in Lancashire; Mr James Lowther lost his seat in Lincolnshire, and four or five other candidates committed to the policy had been beaten. A general criticism of the results on the Tory side was that apathy among their leaders on domestic questions, and the activity and force of the trade unions, had largely turned the election.[1]

Almost immediately, however, this second start for the Liberals was gravely compromised. On 18th December was published the famous rumour that Mr Gladstone was con-

[1] *The Times*, 15th December 1885.

sidering a scheme of complete Home Rule for Ireland; the denial which followed was cautious, amounting to no more than that the statement was unauthorised. It was enough to set at work the liveliest speculations as to the position of Lord Hartington, Mr Chamberlain, Mr Goschen, and other Liberal leaders, whose repudiation of any measure of real independence for Ireland had been emphatic; and the political year ended in uncertainty and disturbance.

Socially, too, it ended in apprehension. The approach of winter revived all the distressing evidences of unemployment, and a new militant atmosphere had been aroused by the determined campaign of the police against street meetings. In September occurred the first of the cases to attract much attention. The police arrested a banner-bearer in the midst of a socialist procession, and in the police-court case which followed William Morris was fined for interference. This drew attention to the Social Democratic Federation, which in April had hardly succeeded in interesting even the casual crowd of a Hyde Park meeting. The free speech campaign grew before the end of the year to a size which caused *The Times* to pronounce upon it as very dangerous and ominous, when it was taken in conjunction with the Irish agitation, the Crofter movement in Scotland, and the whole programme of advanced Liberalism.[1] Within twelve months its ominousness depended on no conjunction with other movements. In general elections labour had as yet no large direct share; but the Trade Union Congress issued in September an election address to the trades bidding them demand of the candidates promises of land for allotments, of free elementary education, and of the removal of "all unnecessary obstacles to civil and magisterial work." In this last direction a step had already been taken by the appointment of the first working-men magistrates[2]—a printer,

[1] 31st December 1885.

[2] Announced by *The Manchester Guardian* in May 1885.

a spinner and a weaver, all secretaries of trade unions, being appointed to the Bench of the Duchy of Lancaster in May, and a miners' agent being appointed in June.

In the closing days of 1885 occurred the last Soudan fight that was to take place for some years. The withdrawal to Wady Halfa was not quite completed when, on 30th December, the Khalifa attacked the troops at Ginniss. He was badly beaten, 800 of his men being killed; and the chief satisfaction growing out of the battle was that Egyptian troops had been engaged, as well as British, and had thus had some of their fear of the dervishes removed. The general policy in regard to the Soudan had been carried on by Lord Salisbury without alteration.

CHAPTER VIII

1886: HOME RULE, THE NAMELESS PARTY, AND THE LABOUR RIOTS

EVEN at the very dawn of 1886 the great Home Rule "split" was in the making. The published rumours of Mr Gladstone's intentions were as much an effect as a cause of popular speculation about them [1]; speculation had begun, because everyone was sure that he must have intentions; and assurance arose from the fact that everyone was pretty certain Lord Salisbury had some. However, the actual publication of the ideas which Mr Gladstone was said to have in his mind did undoubtedly create a new situation; and the excitement it caused was not in the least out of proportion to the gravity of what was taking place behind the scenes. Lord Hartington and Mr Goschen were already half alienated. At this crisis, as at the time of the Mid-Lothian campaign, Mr Gladstone displayed his curious custom of regarding the real factors in a situation as materially affected by the formal political factors. He was not in office, and Lord Salisbury was; therefore the circumstances of the election results warranted an understanding between the Tories and the Nationalists, in order to keep the former in office; therefore Mr Gladstone felt himself justified in awaiting a Tory plan of Irish legislation, and his own ideas were not a project in the real sense. This was an attitude much like his conviction that even after the Mid-Lothian Campaign he was free to accept or refuse the Premiership. To Lord Hartington both these

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 265.

cases were equally an empty adherence to forms. Whatever might be the political theory of the situation, the truth was that Mr Gladstone was considering a plan of Irish self-government. This fact dominated the situation. If the Tories had any intentions of concession to Ireland, they could not now be known; whenever Mr Gladstone moved, his unrivalled position in politics and in the public view gave him the field, and the other party merely reacted automatically in the opposite direction. Mr Gladstone did not himself recognise this; he made an offer to the Tories, in December 1885, of leaving the field to them; and the argument was used on the Tory side that the Irish were Conservative people, only accidentally thrown in 1880 on to the Liberal side.[1] But in truth the return of the importance of the Irish vote had revived as much of old prejudice as of new energy; and there were already complaints of the Irish question being "thrust to the forefront," when local government in England, land transfer, and the procedure of the House of Commons were the questions awaiting decision.[2] Besides, the nature of the exchange of opinion among Liberal leaders must have been shrewdly gauged by the Tory leaders, for by the time Parliament met the latter had decided upon a course in which no glimmer of their last year's temper of tentative concession to Ireland was to be found. Not only were they leaving the field to Mr Gladstone, but they were going to drive him into it. They must have known the instant cost to him. Parliament met for the Queen's speech on 21st January; on 26th January notice was given in the House of Commons of the Government's intention to introduce a Coercion Bill for Ireland, and on the same day the Government fell. Mr Jesse Collings carried an amendment to the address on the

[1] See a letter by Mr Wilfrid Blunt in *The Times*, 1st January 1886.

[2] *The Times*, 1st January 1886.

subject of Labourers' Allotments—the "three acres and a cow" amendment—on which the Irish party voted with the Liberals. But the significant point was that eighteen Liberals, including Hartington, Goschen, Courtney, Henry James, Lubbock, Arthur Elliot and Albert Grey, voted against the amendment; and more than fifty Liberals, including John Bright, abstained from the division. Governments have often been overthrown by more or less irrelevant votes; but what was there in Mr Collings's victory to cause *The Times* at once to start the idea that "a sagacious Liberal Leader"—Lord Hartington, for choice—should seize the opportunity to construct a new party out of equally dissatisfied Liberals and Conservatives? To that degree had the "split" already become notorious. Meanwhile, on 28th January, Lord Salisbury resigned office, and on 1st February Mr Gladstone became Prime Minister for the third time.

As if the year were not opening in sufficiently unusual circumstances, a thoroughly startling event now interrupted the bent of public attention. The troubles and distress of the unemployed had failed to attract notice amid the political excitement. On 8th February a meeting was being held in Trafalgar Square, which appears to have been chiefly an occasion taken by the Fair Trade speakers to call attention to unemployment as a product of Free Trade. Suddenly the meeting was invaded by men from branches of the Social Democratic Federation, headed by Hyndman, John Burns, and Champion. To them such a gathering seemed a mere exploiting of the sufferings of the unemployed for a political purpose, and they captured it. In an instant its temper was wholly and violently changed. A seething mob left the Square, marched through Pall Mall, St James's Street, and Piccadilly, smashed the club windows from which men were looking, as they had looked before, at the woeful procession, overturned and smashed broughams and other private carriages

and then divided into raiding parties, which went breaking windows and doors along South Audley Street, Oxford Street and Regent Street. For a couple of hours the mob held these sacred precincts in terror. The police had been entirely taken by surprise, and could not muster in time. No life was lost, no personal injuries were inflicted; the crowd was admitted next day to have had "forbearance," and to have included a large proportion of men who though poor and distressed had no thought of crime [1]: but all the same London at large felt that it had had its glimpse of revolution. This, it said to itself, was at the back of the vague mutterings it had heard about street-corner meetings and the right of free speech; and it proceeded to draw the distinction, which has always comforted the respectable classes, between the genuine unemployed and the agitator. The latter was pronounced a "moral dynamiter," and the former class was said to be made up of the "inevitable" products of casual labour, bad housing and laziness. Yet fright remained strong enough to cause the ventilation of some rather vague plans for undertaking "public works" to give employment; and from letters written to the newspapers by various employers it is plain that they at least knew better than to blind themselves by drawing facile distinctions in regard to the temper of labouring men. While no one was arrested on account of the startling incidents in London, trouble was brewing elsewhere. There was rioting in Bristol; and in Gateshead, Glasgow, Manchester, Norwich, Nottingham and Sheffield there was such acute distress that at any moment outbreaks might occur.[2] In Manchester, indeed, there was a small riot, which had a curious origin; it began not with the mere holding of a

[1] *The Times*, 10th February 1886.

[2] In Leicester, where the battle between vaccination and its opponents was raging, prosecutions were suspended at this time, because of the prevailing distress.

socialist meeting one Sunday at the end of February, but with the gathering of a crowd after the public-houses closed in the afternoon, to attack the socialists.

Those menaces, however, died down again for a time. They had not yet, so far as could be seen, affected the trade unions; and the trouble was regarded as merely an unfortunate conjunction of theories in themselves negligible with the existence of an unusual degree of destitution. Interest swung back to politics, but practically to only one subject in politics. The annexation of Burma, announced on 2nd January, passed almost unnoticed; a military expedition from India had occupied Mandalay early in December 1885, and King Theebaw and his army had surrendered; the stories of his cruelties and excesses made him for a short time a kind of popular ogre. On the same date it was announced that an envoy had started for Abyssinia, with autograph letters from the Queen, a mission which, issuing first in the withdrawal under agreement with King Menelik of the Soudan garrisons near his frontier, established relations with him important to many British interests. On the same date, again, were published rumours that Bishop Hannington had been killed by the King of Uganda. But Central Africa could not attract any attention while Mr Gladstone was gathering a new Cabinet about him. Of his old colleagues, Lord Hartington, Lord Derby, Lord Northbrook and Mr Bright were absent from it; and Mr Goschen had not taken that place in it which a few months before would certainly have been his. Mr Chamberlain had joined; but both he and Sir George Trevelyan allowed it to be known that they committed themselves no further than to an examination of proposed legislation for Ireland; it was the public belief that Mr Chamberlain intended to try for his own solution of local councils for Ireland; but no one knew whether he had still in mind that Central Board in Dublin which had previously been the suspected

feature of the scheme.[1] Cabinet meetings throughout February and March were of unprecedented frequency. The public speculated on the possibility of Mr Gladstone's resignation, and the construction of a new Liberal Cabinet under Lord Hartington, with Lord Wolseley as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to carry out a policy of severe repression, with local government to follow. Then on 26th March Mr Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan resigned; Mr Gladstone remained in office, and the nation knew that it would have to consider a full Home Rule proposal. The death of Mr W. E. Forster, occurring on 5th April, caused at this moment a recalling of recent Liberal relations with Ireland, which may well have confirmed in their opinion both those Liberals who were determined to make a new effort, and those who felt that for the present there could be no new way. Each group read in its own fashion the life-story of the most bitterly disillusioned of them all.

The concentration of interest on the one subject was assisted in some measure by proceedings which for the time being held the socialist movement in suspended animation. Four of its leaders—Hyndman, Burns, Champion and J. E. Williams—were put on their trial for sedition. The failure of the authorities to make any arrests after the riotous proceedings of 8th February in London had produced a newspaper agitation, which finally forced them into taking such steps as could be taken to meet the pressure of opinion. Socialist meetings were continually going on, and the speeches at them provided sufficient excuse for some Government action. But not, as proved, sufficient evidence to support a heavy charge. The trial was a long one, the defendants being, of course, committed to the Old Bailey. They were acquitted, though the jury allowed themselves the expression of a rider to the effect that Burns and Champion had used

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 194.

language inflammatory and greatly to be condemned. The importance of the trial lay in the new view that it gave to people of superficial thought of the quality of these leaders of socialism. Such men as Morris and Edward Aveling, indeed, the respectable world had heard of; it dismissed the rest as "ranters." But four men who could conduct their own case at the Old Bailey to an acquittal, men of whom only one was in the middle-class sense educated, were a new portent; and from that day the ordinary view of working-class disaffection took a different turn. In general, the trial, by removing the whole matter from the streets to courts of justice, took it for the time out of the foreground of the popular mind.

The House of Commons at the moment practically marked time, awaiting the Home Rule Bill; but it had one interesting incident when a Woman Suffrage Bill came up (of course, a private member's Bill) at the very end of the sitting on 19th February. Only an hour of time remained, and that was largely occupied by the protests of members against the mere idea of considering such a Bill in such a way. But it ended in the Bill being given a second reading; and, though a vote taken in the small hours of the morning in a more than half empty House could not be regarded as of genuine importance, the supporters of Woman Suffrage were jubilant at having established the fact that a second reading for their Bill was not an impossibility. This was the first time one had ever been given. An academic triumph scored by the movement this year was the qualification of the first woman surgeon; Mrs M. E. Dowson, the wife of a London engineer, obtained her diploma from the Irish College of Surgeons in June.

The long and frequent Cabinet meetings achieved a result which, whether politically good or bad, was beyond cavil remarkable; for they had in six weeks constructed from the keel-plate a Bill of the utmost magnitude and the

very first order. In the early days of April it was sufficiently advanced for Parnell to be privately in consultation with Mr Morley, the new Irish Secretary; and on 8th April it was introduced upon a stage in every way worthy of it. The House of Commons was crowded to the doors, and even the floor space between the table and the Bar was covered with benches; every gallery was full; and many members had come at daybreak to secure their seats. Mr Gladstone rose magnificently to the occasion, and spoke for three and a half hours. The Bill as it stood set up a legislature of two Houses in Dublin [1] to deal with Irish, as distinct from Imperial, affairs, and as a corollary excluded Irish members from Westminster; it left the control of customs to the Imperial Parliament, fixing the Irish contribution to Imperial funds at one-fourteenth of the total sum collected, the rest being handed over to the Irish Parliament; it left the control of the police for two years in British hands; the Viceroy was to continue to exist, but not as a party appointment, and in his Privy Council was to be formed a Cabinet which, as in Great Britain, would be the real executive, and would be responsible to Parliament.

The first reading of the Bill took place without a division on 13th April. Before it reached its next stage the effect of its policy on party balance was given an unexpectedly swift propulsion. Mr Chamberlain, with that instinct for handling the electoral machine which had so distinguished him in 1880, went down to Birmingham on 25th April to discuss the new situation with the Liberal Two Thousand; they wished to delay their vote, but Mr Chamberlain induced them to decide at once, with the result that, by an overwhelming majority, they refused their support to the

[1] The Upper House was to consist of 28 representative peers and 75 elected members; and the Lower House of 206 elected members. The two were to sit together, but either House might demand a separate vote.

Home Rule Bill. The cleverness of this move lay in its preparation of the way for the compact whereby the seats of Liberal Anti-Home-Rulers might be left unattacked by Conservatives; this course was, in fact, propounded before a month had passed.[1] On 10th May the second reading debate on the Bill opened, and Lord Hartington moved an amendment of simple rejection. Parnell, speaking for his party, expressed his intention to attack in committee certain points of detail, such as the control of the police, and the exact amount of Ireland's contribution to Imperial funds. This may have given a vague sense that after all the Irish might not be satisfied, and may have turned a few waverers. Others quailed before the proposals contained in the Bill for buying out the landlords; and Mr Chamberlain had given notice of moving the rejection of the Land Purchase Bill which was introduced on 16th April to carry out these proposals. Finally, Lord Randolph Churchill in the middle of May was inciting Ulster to take arms against the Bill, and the position of the "loyal minority" was turning yet other votes. For a month the fight went on; calculations of the result grew more and more tense, and the most sanguine hope on the day before the division was that the Bill might have a majority of about six. In that case the presumption was that it would be carried no further on such a slight majority, but would be taken merely as an assertion of the principle of autonomy for Ireland; the session would be prorogued, and the Cabinet would set itself to drafting a new Bill which might conciliate some of those who at the present stage were objecting only to details. Parnell disliked this prospect, which he thought would discourage Home Rule Liberals. It never became a practical question. In the small hours of 8th June the Bill was rejected by 341 votes to 311. In effect the vital decision had been made a week earlier, when a meeting of dissentient

[1] *The Times*, 17th May 1886.

Liberals, with Mr Chamberlain in the chair, decided not to abstain from the division, but to vote against the Bill; this decision gave 93 votes to the Opposition. The meeting was finally swayed by the influence which, outside as well as inside Parliament, most deeply affected Liberals who had an uncertain mind on the question—the influence of John Bright. When he declared against the Bill he greatly sharpened the immediate issue.

London was at the height of the season, and a season of such excitement as it had not known for years. In every drawing-room the split had made itself felt. One of the greatest Liberal peers, the Duke of Westminster, ostentatiously sold the portrait of Mr Gladstone, which Millais had painted for him; and Birmingham Radicals were guests in great Whig houses. Men were blackballed at clubs for no other reason than their opinions on Home Rule. Hostesses had a new terror to face, for they hardly knew from day to day what old friends would no longer sit at the same table. To a large part of society Home Rule was not only a political tenet: it became a social barrier; and the tendency to regard differences in political opinions as implying differences of class—a tendency entirely the product of the last hundred years—was considerably enhanced. For Mr Gladstone himself, even in the first outbursts, there was some pity, and some kindly feeling. That so unrivalled a political life should end in such a scattering of his own forces had an obvious touch of melancholy. But on the other hand it was clear that only Mr Gladstone could have raised Home Rule to the pitch of a party test, and therefore there was little room for pity in the general view. Meanwhile, from the standpoint of commercial London, the net result of the struggle was that town had not for a long time been so full or so busy; and that across the middle of the money-making fell dissolution and a general election, the second within seven months. The resolution to dissolve was taken by the

Government on 10th June, but the agreement of Queen Victoria to a somewhat tiresome course was only obtained with some difficulty; she yielded finally to Mr Gladstone's representations that a year of embittered Home Rule controversy would do more harm than a second dissolution. Complaints from the public were loud; Mr Gladstone was accused of "springing the election on an absolutely unprepared country," and was warned that he would find Scotland and Wales, those Liberal strongholds, far less in his favour than he supposed. Some Liberals were complaining that the production of the Home Rule Bill had rendered any alternative policy of peace towards Ireland extremely difficult [1]; others wailed in a barren controversy as to whether or no Mr Gladstone had done wrong to the party by "concealing his thoughts." [2] The truest word came, as so often, from a looker-on; Professor Goldwin Smith, writing from Canada to chastise a Liberal Government for bringing in a Bill with no reasoned defence of it, but only sentimentalities about Ireland and the "G.O.M.," remarked also that there was a suspicion, "which, unfortunately, after what has taken place, cannot be said to be fantastic," that the Conservatives had not been far from a Home Rule Bill of their own.[3] The recalling of that suspicion was the best answer both to those who talked of the election being "sprung" upon the country, and to those who complained of Mr Gladstone's silence. Events had moved so fast that politicians had forgotten how much Home Rule had been talked in the previous year, and the rumours of Tory intrigues, as well as of Liberal manœuvrings. The election went rapidly forward; in spite of some acrimony the general compact that the seats of dissentient

[1] See, *e.g.*, Mr Goschen in *The Times*, 18th June 1886.

[2] See, *e.g.*, the correspondence between Bright and Gladstone in *The Times*, 3rd July 1886.

[3] *The Times*, 7th July 1886.

Liberals should not be attacked by Tories held good; the party was so divided that, although the central electoral organisation declared for Mr Gladstone, its big new club, the National Liberal, promoted a subscription for candidates standing against Home Rule.. Before the end of July the new House had been returned with 196 Liberals instead of 235, 316 Tories instead of 251, and 74 dissentient Liberals. Only against Home Rule could there be said to be a majority; and the question was how far that meant a majority against a Liberal Cabinet in general—how far, in other words, Home Rule in future was to be a permanent Liberal attitude.

It is more than likely that the damage done to trade by a dissolution at the height of the season had some slight effect upon the polls. To business men it was peculiarly exasperating, since their affairs were not in a condition to bear disturbance. The smallness of the bank reserves was a standing cause of uneasiness; and the stock market had been restless in face of a railway-rate war in America and the "capturing" of line after line by financial magnates there. Copper had been a badly falling market, too, but was felt by this time to have reached a level which, if low, was probably healthier than its recent heights; the tin market had had a revival, and so had the sugar market, which throughout the early eighties was never in quite a normal condition owing to the disturbing effects of the bounty system.[1] The shipping trade, if not at the moment prosperous, was looking forward more cheerfully, since it had just passed through a period of change, and triple-expansion engines had now established themselves firmly.[2] When business men took a rather wider view of commercial conditions than those afforded by the London exchanges they could not help seeing that, although in their own narrower sense business was not yet good, there

[1] Deputations to Ministers on this subject were frequent.

[2] *The Times*, 2nd January 1886.

had been a great change since 1880. The consuming power of the people had distinctly improved ; the consumption of tea and sugar had risen strongly, and the income-tax assessments were also rising. People began in fact to ask in some bewilderment, as they faced these signs, what was the trade depression ? It is possible that some of the apparent depression throughout these years may be traced to the steady growth of the limited liability principle in trading. In every town businesses were being put upon this basis, and with the increased capital thus obtained were absorbing or squeezing out of the market the smaller middlemen. Great department shops, like the Army and Navy Stores, the Civil Service Supply Association, Whiteley's, Lewis's, were at their busiest expansion in the early eighties. The result was a diminution in the number of the channels of trade, without diminution of the volume. The bankruptcy statistics were depressing, and individual traders in almost every part of the country could speak of bad times ; but the broad statistics of the nation's housekeeping showed at any rate more financial elasticity than it had possessed for years previously. Much might be hoped from a period of political steadiness; and the amount of capital which was waiting for employment may be gathered from the fact that in October, when Guinness's made the first of that series of brewery flotations which we shall have to deal with later, the capital offered was so much over-subscribed that no less than 13,000 letters of regret were posted.

Every trade undertaking seemed in this year to be busy at turning itself into a limited liability company. *Punch* described the tendency as a new fashion. At the same time capitalists were not losing their caution ; the first attempt to float the Manchester Ship Canal, which was made in this year, met with failure. The prospectus, backed by Rothschilds', was issued on 21st July. The contractors, Lucas & Aird, undertook the work for five

and three quarter millions, which was less than the engineers' original estimates; the estimated gross revenue was put at £885,000 a year; and interim dividends of 4 per cent. payable out of capital had been allowed by Parliament.[1] But the public proved shy; Lancashire was already full of expensive means of transit, and the cotton mills had been built everywhere in accordance with railway facilities, and might not, it was thought, easily adjust themselves to the canal. The apparent coolness of Lancashire investors was remarked, and for the present the flotation failed. A trade problem which attained some prominence this year, but waited long for a solution, was the absence of any power to compel the working in this country of patents taken out by foreigners; the only possible procedure was to issue a *mandamus* to compel the patentee to grant licences for manufacture of his patent; but as the *mandamus* could not reach him the power was useless. As for the gold problem, it still sought solution. The bimetallists' theories began to gather more force. Lord Grey in February of this year brought the whole subject forward again, relating it to the most startling difficulties of the moment by arguing that the labour troubles were largely due to the shortage of gold, since the wages bills of employers were in fact going up by the appreciation of the sovereign, and the masters, without knowing the real reason, felt only that they must cut wages down; while the workman, whose sovereign bought him no more than before, could not see why he should be paid less. The bimetallist proposal which Lord Grey revived was for the issue of one-pound notes payable in silver; and that for a limited period these notes should be issued at the bank in exchange for sovereigns, whatever the weight of the latter.

[1] This method of tempting capitalists to put their money into large projects was noted by the socialists, who suggested, in deputations to Ministers, that it might be applied to relief works set on foot for the unemployed.

But there were two objections to this—the first that, if you were to escape the ultimate necessity of reconverting the silver into gold, you must come to an international agreement that gold should cease to be the only valid exchange; and the second (a serious objection which the bimetallists never really overcame), that there was no unanimity as to the basis of calculation of the relative value at which silver was to be coined. The knowledge of the gold supply in South Africa was still wide of the mark. The air was full of rumours: about one thousand Europeans were said to be at the goldfields, and Delagoa Bay and Cape Town were alike full of adventurers. Yet the most authoritative article of the moment on the goldfields [1] dealt entirely with the Barberton and James Town districts, with the operations of companies no one of which had a capital of more than £200,000, and most had only £25,000 or £30,000; and the article concluded with the opinion that the whole industry was insignificant in comparison with the great days of the Australian fields. The Rand was still being kept out of sight by those who knew of it. In the autumn a Currency Commission was appointed, with Mr Balfour, one of the foremost bimetallists, as its chairman.

A striking feature of the year was the interest aroused by the announcement that Pasteur had discovered a cure for hydrophobia. The England of to-day, to which rabies is unknown, has forgotten the recurrent horror of deaths from the bites of dogs, for which no alleviation had appeared until Pasteur's system of injection was believed to have provided one. Fortunately, in this matter, as in that of cholera, medical opinion was by now so sane that reliance upon cure was not allowed to weaken the arguments for preventive measures. The public was warned that, until the first element of novelty had passed away, it would be impossible really to sift the evidence of cures, or to be certain that in the cases treated the dogs had been actually

[1] *The Times*, 23rd September 1886.

rabid ; and meanwhile the wisdom of muzzling orders was being steadily emphasised.

It was not, on the whole, a year of great interest in science ; the æsthetic movement was beginning to have the effect of shifting middle-class interest from progress to literature. Electricity had fallen upon dull times. A slight fillip was given to the ballooning craze by the voyage across the Channel of a French balloon fitted with steering gear, wherewith the aeronauts had manœuvred over ships in the Channel, and dropped imitation torpedoes. But a controversy between rival publishers about their respective libraries of cheap literature showed the true tendency just then of middle-class culture. The controversy revealed how large and profitable a sale there was for cheap standard books. The originator of this form of enterprise, Mr H. G. Bohn, had died two years before (on 25th August 1884), just as his idea was becoming a popular success. The contrasts presented to the world in *Patience* were being repeated in the less exalted ranks of the community. In society they had already begun to fade, and women, instead of hanging on the utterances of the exquisite, were filling the schools of arms, and devoting themselves to boxing and fencing. Young ladies were distressing their parents by travelling on the tops of omnibuses ; and playing the banjo was the most desirable accomplishment in Mayfair drawing-rooms. The elegant pale poets and the massive heavy dragoons of *Patience* were now being repeated *ad infinitum* at suburban tea-parties, in young men who conversed with a finger to the brow, and other young men who played lawn tennis, and rode high bicycles, and were muscular and obtuse. Theosophy began this year to have a rather large and ill-informed following, with the result that " astral bodies " became a current joke ; and telepathy and phantasms occupied the smatterers in science, as well as the Psychical Research Society.

The promoters of annual exhibitions in London were again as successful as they had been with the "Fisheries" and the "Healtheries" in attaching their provision of mere amusement to a serious subject. This year the exhibition was of Colonial and Indian products and industries; and it fitted very cleverly with that new view of the importance of the Colonies to which Mr Goschen had given expression.[1] The Secretary for the Colonies announced that he would be At Home in his department on certain days to Colonial representatives; and the latter, arriving in England in July in connection with the exhibition, were given an official round of entertainments, the Queen receiving them at Windsor, the Admiralty giving them a day with the fleet at Portsmouth, and various banquets being arranged. Permanent results followed; at the end of the year the Colonial Secretary (Mr E. Stanhope) made proposals for a Colonial Conference, to be attended by the Agents-General in London, and any leading public men from the colonies who might happen to be able to come to England—a more informal affair than the later developments of the kind; colonial defence and telegraphic and postal services were the subjects proposed for discussion. It was also largely due to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition that, when interest in Queen Victoria's approaching Jubilee began to be strong, the Prince of Wales suggested the foundation of the Imperial Institute, to give permanence to the kind of presentation of colonial activities this year had achieved. The main sporting event of the year was the racing for the America Cup, for which, after a long interval, a challenge had been sent from England. The British representative was the *Galatea*, and the winds proved far too light for her. Her rival, the *Mayflower*, had been given the "skimming-dish" form, which was then so new that it had not been ventured upon for the boat that had to

[1] See p. 158.

cross the Atlantic before the contest; the *Galatea's* beam was 15 feet, the *Mayflower's* 23·5 feet, and the *Galatea's* draught was 13·5 feet, while the *Mayflower's* was only 9 feet.

The sporting world was shocked later in the year by the suicide of Fred Archer, the most popular jockey of his day.[1] He rode in the course of his career no less than 2746 winners, and his great gift was in riding horses that could not possibly have won with any other jockey. The sensation caused by the news of his suicide has, too, more than a personal importance; it marks, and was felt at the time to mark, the enormous increase in the popularity of racing, which had been growing up almost unobserved. The interest in Fred Archer reached households which twenty years before would have paid no attention to his death; and his pleasant steady character had done much to break down the old view of the turf as a disreputable interest for anyone but owners. His suicide was attributed to depression of spirits caused by the incessant "wasting" to keep down his weight.

When the new Parliament met there was in it a party which as yet was no party. What were dissentient Liberals to do? The Liberal headquarter organisation had exiled them; and indeed after the results of the election they were not likely to want to attach themselves to a party standing for Home Rule. Yet were they going to abandon all Liberal principles? The only answer to this question was that when asked, towards the end of July, to formulate a new Radical programme of reform, and found a new club upon it, Mr Chamberlain replied that after such an upheaval it would be better to wait a few months before taking any definite steps.[2] Mr Chamberlain, there can be little doubt, was feeling solitary at the moment. He had political satellites, but no political friend. Lord Hartington acted with him in regard to Home Rule, but the gulf between the two on other topics

[1] 8th November 1886. [2] *The Times*, 28th July 1886.

was too great to be easily bridged. It happened unfortunately that at the same time Mr Chamberlain, by another current of events, lost the help of a genuine political friendship. Sir Charles Dilke, whose own entrance into the Government of 1886 had been, owing to his great ability and wide democratic sympathies, combined with an unusual knowledge of foreign affairs, quite beyond question, had secured Mr Chamberlain's presence in that Government by refusing to serve himself unless Mr Chamberlain were invited to join. Now at the crisis of the latter's career, Sir Charles Dilke withdrew from Parliament, his personal honour and morality having been brought into question by a case in the law courts. Thus isolated, Mr Chamberlain decided to travel abroad for some time, leaving politics and Liberal Unionism behind him. The Government had in the end been formed on a purely Conservative basis. Lord Salisbury had offered (though at the time this was not definitely known) to stand aside in favour of Lord Hartington, and to serve under him if he would form a Government. But Lord Hartington was not a man who moved at that speed, and the offer was declined. A Cabinet was formed in which there was only one appointment that excited comment. Lord Randolph Churchill, the bane of his leaders, the rash apostle of Tory Democracy, the incalculable element in the party, was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the leadership of the Commons. No wonder men thought that old political traditions were perishing, if the path to office was to make yourself obnoxious to your leaders, and a will-o'-the-wisp to your constituents. At the same time no one doubted Lord Randolph's brilliancy; and as it was now evident that the Conservative working man was a reality, there might be less temptation to embark on " Tory Democracy " as a policy. The only doubt was whether he would manage well the somewhat delicate relations with the dissentient Liberals. For some weeks the latter were too much taken up with

their own difficulties to be critical. By August they had acquired a name. The Liberal Unionist Association had been formed outside Parliament; but it was ultimately announced that Mr Chamberlain and all the dissentients were joining it.[1] During the autumn sitting the new party were sufficiently established to be showing signs of offence at their treatment in the House of Commons; there were complaints that the Tories howled them down, but were afraid of the real Home Rulers. A sign of very strained relations was given in the Birmingham municipal elections, where the Liberal Unionists supported Gladstonian Liberal candidates, with Mr Chamberlain's approval, because of the Tory attitude in the town.

These ins and outs were supposed to be the only legitimate interest of politicians. The heavy hand shut down again upon Ireland, the new Government's first step being pretty sharply criticised even by many of their friends. Sir Robert Hamilton, the Permanent Under Secretary for Ireland, was removed from his post, because he had been identified with Mr Gladstone's proposals. It was felt that this was a serious blow at the principles of public service. An agitation for a revision of judicial rents in Ireland was being pressed upon the Government, partly because the summer of 1886 had seen another failure of harvest, and partly on the more general plea that the appreciation of gold made the judicial rents unfair; it was pointed out that even in England the rent-roll was calculated to have dropped from sixty millions to forty-five millions a year, and the evidence before the Royal Commission on Trade had tended in the same direction.[2] The Government refused to take any steps; evictions increased; "moonlighting" began once more to aggravate

[1] The name was in existence some years earlier (see, for instance, an article in *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. i., 1880), but it was now first definitely adopted, as a party name.

[2] See *The Pall Mall Gazette* "Extra" on Irish Rents, 1886.

the figures of agrarian crime; and the Plan of Campaign was launched in November.

Party difficulties blinded politicians once again to the very serious trouble at their doors. The temper which had broken out in the brief street fury of 8th February, and had been suspended for a while by the trial of the socialist leaders, was bad enough in June to cause people to say that the excitement of elections in London was really to be dreaded. Nor was the nervousness confined to London; at Cardiff, for instance, the police were so perturbed that, having had to deal with a crowd which had given them some difficulty, they went on to fall upon a perfectly harmless one, listening to speeches at the Liberal Club, and very nearly batoned the new member; and in Liverpool socialist meetings were acting as sparks to the magazine of Orange fever which is always in store there. Nevertheless London was naturally the centre of anxiety. When a big socialist demonstration was held in Trafalgar Square at the end of August no less than 2000 police were on duty: they had warning enough then to be ready. But a new danger was revealed when the socialists took to invading other meetings, such as a demonstration in favour of Free Education at the beginning of October, which had naturally appeared to call for less policing. Nor was London allowed to forget the real misery which was issuing in these disturbances. A manifesto was published by the Social Democratic Federation calling on the destitute and unemployed to follow the Lord Mayor's Show, silently, in thousands. This was, of course, instantly forbidden by the police, and the result was that, after the Lord Mayor's Show had turned as usual from the Strand down to the Embankment, there was a sudden rush of men to Trafalgar Square, and a defiant meeting began. But troops were at hand which had been on duty for the procession. Suddenly a line of Life Guards appeared trotting round the square to a strategic position, and with

this force in reserve the police marched into the crowd and set to work to scatter it. The energies of the leaders of upper-class opinion at this time were turned to attempting to separate the distressed from those who were organising and leading them. The accepted point of view was that open-air meetings were wholly unnecessary, and that the socialist demand for free speech was only being craftily attached to a genuine trouble, and should be firmly handled.[1] The distress, at any rate, had been so pressed upon public notice that the closing months of the year were full of suggestions for meeting it. There were appeals for charity, signed by men of such different views as the Bishop of London, Cardinal Manning and Mr Spurgeon; there were requests for a mitigation of the rules of outdoor relief, and appeals for funds to enable public bodies to set on foot relief works; a Mansion House Committee was appointed to collect information as to the unemployment, and to consider schemes to meet it. But as a political question the trouble was not allowed to rank; it was held to be "undignified" to expect any reference to it at the Lord Mayor's banquet; and the single exception to this attitude, which can be quoted as of any importance, is the plea by one whose early death deprived the poor of a good friend, Lord Sydney Godolphin Osborne. He was busy in October urging the Government to attend as a Government to the matter. Though not strictly affairs of the unemployed, the trouble at this time in Skye, where the military were called out against the disaffected crofters, and the tithe riots in Lancashire and Wales, should have added to the general uneasiness about the temper of the working people. It was a time too much disturbed by poverty and

[1] An interesting side-issue was that large new hotels, such as the Grand, opened in 1880, and the Metropole, opened in 1885, were attracting many visitors, especially Americans, to the neighbourhood of Trafalgar Square, which was therefore peculiarly unsuitable for public meetings.

hardship for any very immediate interest to be taken by working men in their representation on the benches of the House of Commons. Joseph Arch was returned as the first agricultural labourer in the House, and the Labour members at the beginning of the year numbered nine—Messrs Abraham, Arch, Broadhurst, Burt, W. R. Cremer, Fenwick, Leicester, Pickard and J. Wilson.

At the end of the year the party problem was suddenly galvanised again into prominence. To everyone's amazement, Lord Randolph Churchill resigned the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. His reason was that he had been unable to carry his declared policy of economy against the demands of the Admiralty and the War Office. Even those who sympathised with him felt his resignation, before he had so much as produced a Budget, an extraordinarily hasty step. It is known now that he calculated on the Government being obliged to ask him to resume his post, and so give him a vastly strengthened position. But he had been too sure that the Liberal Unionists were not yet ready for coalition—he had considered his possible Conservative successors alone. He can hardly be blamed for this. On the very day of his resignation, for instance, Mr Chamberlain had been asserting himself "unchanged" on such a Radical proposal as that of Disestablishment; and although on 17th December Mr Chamberlain had a great meeting in Birmingham, as a counter-blast to a Home Rule meeting in November at which Morley and Parnell had spoken, it was rumoured on 23rd December that he was considering a *rapprochement* with the Liberal leaders. The revival of coercion had held the dissentient Liberals at a distance from the Conservatives; and the truth at which the rumours guessed was that Sir William Harcourt, Lord Herschell, Mr Chamberlain, Sir George Trevelyan and Mr Morley were meeting quietly at Sir William Harcourt's house. But the most important person was not there; Lord Hartington had refused to attend; and meanwhile

the Conservatives, really anxious about their position in the Commons, were moving heaven and earth to get him to accept the leadership there. He would not consent to that, but he would do what was at the moment almost as much help to the Tories—he would persuade Mr Goschen to take the Exchequer. The results were considerable; the Tories got a Chancellor of the Exchequer who as a financier commanded everyone's respect, and were really better off in that regard than before Lord Randolph Churchill resigned; but they also got what they valued still more, an admission that Liberal Unionists could serve under a Conservative Prime Minister.

The public mind slipped back comfortably into those varied plans for celebrating the Queen's Jubilee which largely occupied the newspapers in December 1886; and expended some of its leisure in speculating about Emin Pasha. News had filtered through that he alone of all the provincial governors of the Soudan was still holding out; and proposals were being made for sending him relief.

CHAPTER IX

1887: THE JUBILEE

THE report of the Royal Commission on Trade, which was one of the first events of the New Year,[1] proved to be a much more balanced attempt to diagnose industrial difficulties than had been anticipated at the time of the Commission's appointment. The "Fair Trade" remedy was, indeed, recommended by a small minority of four commissioners; but was dismissed by the majority on the ground that it was "hardly worth while to discuss a scheme which involves at once a total upset of our present Budget arrangements, a reversal of our trade policy, and a breach with our foreign customers." The report dwelt upon some of those inconsistent features of the trade situation which had already puzzled the observant. There was no falling off in the volume of our foreign trade, or in the amount of capital engaged in it, or in the accumulation of capital throughout the country, or in the aggregate of production. Yet something certainly was amiss. The commissioners put part of the responsibility down to over-production; they also suggested, but only in tentative terms, that the rise in the value of gold was a source of difficulty; they asserted more confidently that the workman was getting wages which were perhaps too little affected by falling prices. Their recommendations moved, as was to be expected, on extremely official lines; they advised, for instance, that traders should be exhorted to cheapen production and so widen the market, and should realise that as competition became keener business methods

[1] Published on 17th January 1887.

must become better; higher education, and a more attentive collection of statistics were corollaries of this proposition. But some of the recommendations were rather less academic; they called for re-examination of railway traffic rates, for the freeing of canals from railway ownership and control, for light railways to assist agriculture and make possible an industrial decentralisation; and for legislation against counterfeit marking, and for some improvement of the Limited Liability Acts.

Such a document could not mean much to the thousands out of employment; and what it meant to their leaders was not conciliatory. Kindly people were ready enough to feel sympathetic, and hold drawing-room meetings to discuss whether the distress was exceptional or chronic; that distinction was at the time a favourite method of attacking the "agitators," the argument being that there was always inevitable distress, as a sort of "waste product" of an industrial age, and that the prominence given to it was only a move of the socialists. The latter were represented as objecting to philanthropic inquiry, and resenting "inquisition"; this was, no doubt, one way of describing the socialist's impatience at seeing the whole question shuffled off into a philanthropic atmosphere against all their endeavours to keep it in a political one. But it is possible that, like most reformers, they had their eyes so firmly set upon the goal that they failed to observe how many laps in the race they had already run. It was Lord Salisbury, to continue the metaphor, who rang the bell in one of those moments of frankness with which he was apt to disturb his friends and allies. He was replying to a correspondent on the subject of State-aided emigration—a favourite project of the time for relieving industrial congestion; private effort had already established a settlement of East Londoners in Manitoba. Lord Salisbury wrote that until this remedy was more demonstrably a success Parliament would not adopt it; but when it was,

Parliament would not be frightened by any socialist quality in the scheme. "If it is convinced that a measure is likely to answer," he said, "it never troubles itself about the school of thought from which the measure is drawn."[1] This is in its way a version of the Fabian position; but the socialists, in contact with the problem of the unemployed, demanded for it a political formulation; and the apparently impregnable habit of treating trade questions as a middle-class affair exasperated them into making their demand one for separate formulation. They pursued their campaign of street meetings, and early in February there was more rioting, not only in London, where windows were broken in Clerkenwell and up Goswell Road, but also at Blantyre and Coatbridge; in April John Williams was arrested again, with some others, after a socialist meeting at the Marble Arch.

One immediate effect of the report of the Commission on Trade makes this year peculiarly notable. The insistence upon the need for better trade methods and higher education provided a rallying point for all the energy which had been going into municipal art schools and training classes. Here was a piece of work which Parliament might well undertake for the business community, the more easily as that community had already created the skeleton of a system. Lord Hartington, to whom technical education in this country owes more than to anyone else, was the first prominent public man to take up the idea. In a speech at the London Polytechnic on 16th March he urged the great municipalities to organise technical education on a large scale in subjects suitable to the industrial needs of their districts; as yet, no suggestion was made of any other than private provision of the necessary funds. On 21st March a deputation waited upon Lord Cranbrook at the Education Department to ask for departmental action; he, too, attributed the duty of taking action to the local

[1] Letter published in *The Times*, 22nd February 1885.

authorities, on the fairly sound principle that they could go on to "that real secondary education which can never be reached by the Elementary Education Department"; he added a quotation from a speech some years earlier by Mr Mundella, to the effect that the idea of giving technical education to the whole working class was an entire mistake, the inference being that local authorities could move in a partial way that would be impossible to a public department. Meanwhile the stirring of a new spirit in education was seen in a growing revolt of teachers against "the Juggernaut of percentages"; they wished for a little more flexibility in method, and a little less rigid judgment by examination results; there was, perhaps, something in the dry comment that their revolt was from one point of view a confession that the system got a great deal of work out of them.

The death of Sir Joseph Whitworth on 23rd January may have helped to awaken men to some understanding of what modern trade exacted—what alertness, what high degree of technical knowledge. For he had made his immense fortune by certain mechanical inventions which were thoroughly of the new movement—accurate measuring machines, true planes, standard gauges, and other such implements. He himself had had no technical education beyond that which he picked up in engineering shops; personally he was in the tradition of the story-book men of business who build up a fortune on a foundation stone of half-a-crown, and was to the end of his life a rather rough man, with a passion for trotting horses. But his work made such education more than ever necessary for other men. In the end, he also made it more attainable in his own city, for he left the greater part of his huge fortune on trust for public purposes in Manchester, and the first expansion of technical education there was due to his bequest.

The greatest fillip of all to technical education was given

by the fortunate association of it with the great affair in all men's minds this year—the Jubilee. When the celebration was only a month away, and popular enthusiasm for the Queen at its height, she went down to open the Queen's Hall of the People's Palace in Mile End Road, and to lay the foundation stone of the Technical and Handicraft Schools of that institution. It had grown from a long-buried seed. In 1841 Mr Barber Beaumont left a large sum of money "for the intellectual improvement and the rational recreation and amusement of the people of the East End." There had been no organised means of applying the bequest, and for forty years it lay practically idle. Then a novel by Walter Besant, *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, drew an imaginary picture of a great palace of education and recreation in East London; men recalled the dormant bequest, and the scheme for the People's Palace sprang to life. Besant worked hard for it; Mr Beaumont's money did not suffice for the purpose, and subscriptions were raised, the great City companies, especially the Drapers' Company, contributing largely; and the project was sufficiently advanced by May 1887 to be able to gather to itself some of the Jubilee enthusiasm. Besant was presented to the Queen after she had laid the foundation stone. Meanwhile the City justifiably reminded the world that it was doing a good deal already. The City and Guilds of London Institute at South Kensington was advancing towards completion; the Finsbury Technical College was teaching 169 day students and 764 evening students, a large majority of whom were artisans, and 200 of whom were apprentices; the South London School of Technical Art had 187 pupils; and the guilds also made grants to the schools of engineering and chemical technology at University College, and the school of metallurgy at King's College.

The public was ready to be interested in social affairs. The uneasiness among the Conservative leaders at the

time of Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation was one of those curious political alarms which belong to pure politics and not to real life at all. In point of fact, although people were startled and interested by that event, there was in the nation at large none of that canvassing of its effect upon party relations which Lord Salisbury seemed to fear. The nation had had its fill of politics for a while. The new Franchise and the quarrel between the two Houses of Parliament, the death of Gordon, and the Home Rule Bill had given it two years in which political subjects were the prime interest. The ordinary man was quite ready to let them slip into the background. One event, however, of the beginning of the year touched him. On 12th January Lord Iddesleigh died suddenly in an ante-room while waiting to see Lord Salisbury. It was sad even from the most casual point of view. As Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Iddesleigh had had to see his position in the House of Commons slowly but remorselessly weakened; he had been too old, too slow, too formal in his leadership of the Opposition from 1880 to 1885 to hold his own in a Parliament fresh and active. Lord Randolph Churchill's gadfly activities had been as damaging to Sir Stafford Northcote as to Mr Gladstone; and in the brief Government of Lord Salisbury from June 1885 to February 1886 Northcote found no place at all; his leadership in the Commons was taken away, and he accepted the consolation of a title, going to the House of Lords as Lord Iddesleigh. When Lord Salisbury returned to power in July 1886 he made Lord Iddesleigh Foreign Secretary; but in the disturbance caused by Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation Lord Salisbury changed his mind again, and did it somewhat unkindly. Lord Iddesleigh read in the newspapers one morning that Lord Salisbury had decided to take his place at the Foreign Office. It was no wonder that when the news came that the old man, tired, disappointed, but patient and loyal to the end, had died in a

chair in Lord Salisbury's ante-room, people who had never known him felt grieved.

His last piece of work at the Foreign Office had been in connection with the expedition for the relief of Emin Pasha. Mr H. M. Stanley left London towards the end of January to reach the Soudan by way of the Congo.

With the approach of the Queen's Jubilee, the national pride in her was reviving the feeling that the British were a fine race, and their Empire a noble achievement. Perhaps because this form of patriotism had but poor sustenance in recent affairs, it grew somewhat self-conscious and aggressive, and a little inclined to "trail its coat." It made much of the Colonial Conference which assembled early in April. Imperial Federation was proposed as a subject for debate, but beyond a rather empty discussion of the types of ship that colonies might keep up in a general system of Imperial Defence little was accomplished, except that Australia definitely undertook a payment for the maintenance of a British squadron on her coasts. Other debates of the conference were on the desirability of making colonial guaranteed stocks legal trustee investments, and on commercial relations, and postal and telegraphic facilities. The last point had already been adopted as his own by Mr Henniker Heaton, and his advocacy of an Imperial Penny Post was well under way. These were the kind of assertive but not immediately pressing affairs for which the ordinary man was in the mind. His view of the political situation was simple: Gladstone had been beaten, Salisbury was in, therefore there would be nothing searching or subversive to bother about, and he might, politically speaking, take a spell off. He was suddenly wrenched from his security in April by a newspaper bombshell.

To those more vitally concerned political parties were still in no small confusion. When the first flush of Goschen's acceptance of the Chancellorship of the Ex-

chequer had passed off, men asked, What, after all, would his position exactly amount to? They felt that, whatever might be the readiness for a coalition among some of the dissentient Liberals, there was a strong Conservative feeling against it; Mr Chamberlain had not ceased to be regarded as a dangerous Radical. Yet on the other hand it appeared with some suddenness that he would never again be a Gladstonian; the Round Table conference which had met in December to attempt to patch up the Liberal split had not achieved its object. An article from Mr Chamberlain's pen, speaking of the Irish people as "disloyal,"[1] revealed a temper which was so remote from that of the Gladstonians that the hopes of a *rapprochement* were extinguished. Yet, again, Mr Chamberlain was believed to entertain still his own scheme of concession to Ireland—some fair rent proposals and a system of local governing bodies, without any control of the administration of justice or of the police—and was not likely, therefore, even if his general Radical views did not stop the way, to pull in harmony with the Government. The Crimes Bill was a serious obstacle to coalition; its production was a reply to the Plan of Campaign. The Plan was another stage in the disintegration of Parnell's control of Irish agitation. It was that tenants in Ireland, carefully organised by estates, and acting under committees for each estate, should cease entirely to deal with the landlord's agent as individuals; should offer as a body, through the committee, the half-yearly rent subject to the reduction they demanded; and, if this were refused, should fund the money, drawing upon it for relief when the agent had put in force all the tedious and objectionable processes of eviction, sale, and distress. Parnell condemned the Plan, which was first published as a supplement to *United Ireland* on 20th November 1886; it was over that border of obvious illegality which he had always refused to cross. But it went forward in spite of

[1] Published in *The Baptist*, February 1887.

him; and he was driven back to fighting in the House of Commons against the inevitable coercion measures. Practically he was where he had been before 1880, with the two currents of Irish agitation again wholly separate, and the Irish party handicapped by the odium of violences with which it had no connection. Moreover he was now often ill, and he moved about the precincts of the House carelessly dressed, with lank hair, a wild dark figure, his old silence and reserve turned into a new and more mystifying habit of disappearing entirely from sight for days or even weeks at a time; no one knew where he was at such times, but there were already many who suspected in what company he was. Both his own circumstances and the political circumstances of the moment must be taken into account as we come to the sensational blow struck in April of this year. In politics we have the only hope of a stable and continuous Government held in check by the delay of the coalition, a great cause of delay being the reluctance of dissentient Liberals to accept the Government's Irish policy; at the end of March separate meetings of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists were being held on the Crimes Bill. On the personal side we have Parnell still in control of his party, but clearly, by reason of the persistence in the Plan of Campaign, less able to maintain his old attitude of aloofness from violence; and also, for other reasons, in a position which might be reckoned on as making him less ready to resent attack. It was a tempting occasion for a stroke which should so deeply discredit him as to brush away the last reluctance of Liberal Unionists, and also render co-operation with the Irish Nationalists a killing handicap to the Liberals. So the stroke was dealt. *The Times* began publishing a series of articles entitled "Parnellism and Crime," in which extracts from speeches by members of the Parnellite party were so conjoined with the story of agrarian crime in Ireland as to make the parliamentary agitation and Fenian

lawlessness one thing. But these articles would not have accomplished the object in view. The final attack was the publication on 18th April of a facsimile of a letter purporting to have been written by Parnell soon after the Phœnix Park murders. The text left no doubt of the insinuation. The letter—dated "15/5/82," a fortnight after the murders—ran thus:

"DEAR SIR,—I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce the murders was the only course open to us. To do that promptly was plainly our best policy. But you can tell him, and all others concerned, that though I regret the accident of Lord F. Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts. You are at liberty to show him this, and others whom you can trust also, but let not my address be known. He can write to the House of Commons. Yours very truly,

"CHAS. S. PARNELL."

No one who at this interval of time opens that famous number of the newspaper, and sees the middle of one of its central pages occupied by the facsimile, can fail to respond to the thrill that its publication caused, especially in days when in the normal course nothing interrupted the plain typography of newspapers, when there were no photographic illustrations or any other efforts of "process" reproduction. It was the sight of the handwriting which swept away all suspension of judgment. To the world at large it was clear enough that at the very time when he had been denouncing and repudiating completely the Phœnix Park murders, Parnell had been writing to a Fenian leader to say that these repudiations were merely diplomatic—that he only regretted Lord F. Cavendish's death as an accident, and had less than no regret for the death of Mr Burke.

The publication of the facsimile was carefully timed. The day of its appearance was the day of the second reading division on the Government's Coercion Bill. No one could say that Parnell lacked occasion for an immediate denial, and members of Parliament, who had brought to the Lobby that excitement which had run like wildfire over the country during the day, clustered silent in the House when Parnell rose immediately before the division. He gave the most downright denial to the authenticity of the letter; he was as calm as ever, and he put his denial in the plainest, simplest terms. But even in this assembly the power of the reproduced handwriting was strong, and the high standing of the newspaper concerned was a considerable element in the estimation of the worth of the denial. The Conservatives openly derided it; the Liberal Unionists, if less jubilant, felt it so inadequate that they could act as if the letter were genuine. They had been assisted over their scruples, and the Coercion Bill got its second reading. It was a measure severe even in the history of coercion; for its operation had no time-limit. It gave the usual powers to the executive to proclaim disturbed districts and dangerous associations, to order inquiries upon oath even when no one was actually on trial, and to suspend trial by jury for a list of offences that practically covered all the operations of the Plan of Campaign. Yet once again the old rule held good, that with a Coercion Bill a Land Bill should pass. So great had been the hurry for coercion that the Government did not appear to mind what variations of purpose it went through on the land question. In 1885 it had refused all reconsideration of judicial rents; in 1886 the Cowper Commission and the Government's own envoy, Sir Redvers Buller, alike reported that the demand for a reduction of rents was an honest demand, and that the Irish tenants, as a whole, genuinely could not pay the old rents. Still the Government held to its refusal, evictions went forward (the

famous Woodford evictions on the Clanricarde estate took place in the winter of 1886-1887); and then in July 1887 Lord Salisbury calmly accepted the evidence he had been steadily refusing, and established new judicial rents under a land court. These two Bills, it may be remarked in passing, were Mr Balfour's introduction as a member of Government to the House of Commons. He had succeeded Sir Michael Hicks Beach as Chief Secretary at the beginning of March.

The Coercion Bill is memorable as having led to one of the most drastic alterations of procedure in the House of Commons. It was the first Bill to which "guillotine" closure was applied. Curiously enough, the Bill had not been subjected to the purely obstructive tactics of the Irish party. But on 10th June the Government carried a resolution that a week later the committee stage of the Bill should end, and clauses still undiscussed should be put forthwith without debate. This was a violent answer to the growing bewilderment, which was expressed at the opening of this session (and at the opening of every session for the past six or seven years), as to how the House of Commons was to get through its work. Before the guillotine closure was adopted the House had already made the existing closure resolutions more readily applicable. The stipulation in the resolution of 1882 for a majority of a certain size was abolished, and closure of debate by a bare majority was authorised, provided the chairman accepted a motion to that effect and not less than two hundred members supported it. Parliament made very little progress this year with anything but its Irish legislation. The Government accepted from a private member a Truck Bill dealing with certain methods of paying workmen in kind, which had escaped earlier Acts; it was still, for instance, the custom in some districts to pay agricultural labourers partly in supplies of cider. The passing of the First Offenders Bill, introduced by Sir Howard Vincent, not

for the first time, was a good piece of work rather hastily done; gloomy critics predicted that it would lead to such espionage as this country had never tolerated. A Technical Education Bill was introduced, giving power to local authorities to set up technical schools and to combine for this purpose with other localities in order to save overlapping and spread the cost; but the Bill was dropped to make way for other legislation. An Allotments Bill was more fortunate, and became law; the authority to administer it was the Local Sanitary Authority, appealing to Quarter Sessions, but there was a strong disposition to eliminate the latter and set up the Local Government Board as the supreme authority. This disposition (and indeed the production of the Bill itself) indicated that the legislation on County Government, long promised by the Liberal Ministry of 1880 but always postponed by the various complications of that Ministry's career, was going to be taken up by their opponents. One of the reasons given by Mr W. H. Smith (who had succeeded Lord Randolph Churchill as Leader of the Commons) for the abandonment of certain Bills in August was the necessity for passing a Local Boundaries Bill to clear the way for a Local Government Bill in the following year.

Nothing shows better the suspension of public interest in politics than the curious history of the Government's Irish legislation of this year. A Coercion Bill for the first time permanently at the disposal of the Executive, a Land Bill which was a bland "doubling" on all Lord Salisbury had said the year before, and incidentally a drastic innovation in the procedure of the House—all accomplished without any disturbance. Mr Gladstone could not have attempted one quarter of such changes without rousing the country. Partly this was due to his great personal position. What he did stood in the popular mind for the fiery, the exalted, the breath of the future. His defeat had been enough to make men settle down in their normal ways

again; and the men who defeated him were free to do almost anything without risk of disturbance. Partly too the supposed Parnell letter in *The Times* had had on the normal Englishman the effect it was intended to have on the Liberal Unionists. Parnell had always despised English public opinion, and, as we have seen, part of the secret of his power in Ireland was his avoiding any friendliness from England. His curt denial of the authenticity of the letter therefore was taken to be his usual contemptuous way of treating this country, the result being that in the general sense no one felt himself called upon to have any conscience about the Irish party or the Irish. The public after a week or two dropped the letter as it had dropped all politics, and gave itself to a summer of heightened gaiety, a holiday summer.

Everything was done—even to the appropriation of a Parisian popular tune for street and barrel-organ use—to make people think of the Jubilee and nothing else. Shops placarded it, villages feasted it, errand-boys whistled it. Last of all the weather rose to it. On 20th June the Queen proceeded to a great thanksgiving service in Westminster Abbey, where her venerable figure was enthroned upon a dais on the very spot on which fifty years before she had received the homage of her realm. Her procession to the Abbey was such as had never in the world's history accompanied a crowned head. Three kings were in it—the King of Denmark, the King of the Belgians, and the King of the Hellenes—and the Crown Princes of every throne in Christendom, and of some outside Christendom. Three sons, five sons-in-law, and nine grandsons and grandsons-in-law rode behind her carriage; midmost in the line of sons-in-law rode the tall Crown Prince of the German Empire, his silver helmet, his long fair beard, and his white tunic making him the princeliest figure of the whole. The day was a universal holiday, and there was not a town or village which had not the means of making festival, and

of giving it lasting commemoration in some monument, however modest. At nightfall bonfires were lit on all high hills. A new coinage was struck, chiefly remarkable, after the first novelty had passed away, for the fact that the sixpence was identical in design with the half-sovereign, so that a little gilding was sufficient for the perpetration of frauds.[1]

The Jubilee was an occasion which prompted retrospects, and every newspaper and review fell to taking stock of England's progress during fifty years. Developments of machinery and means of communication belong in the main to a period earlier than that of this history. They provided ground for almost unmitigated satisfaction. Yet the social condition of the country gave some pause; it hardly seemed to express the results of a general advance, except in the broadest kind of material well-being. Even in that respect, though the country as a whole was vastly richer, there seemed to be forms of poverty more acute than the old days had known; and there were still horrible slums, horrible corners in country villages, hovels on the thresholds of mansions. Wealth had indeed been more widely distributed; but the distribution had run in channels. The growth of industrialism had, since the passing of the Limited Liability Acts, begun to carry the profits of industry out into the professional middle classes, as a return for the investment of savings. Professor Leone Levi, one of the greatest political economists of the day, writing soon after the publication of the Report of the Royal Commission on Trade, to contest the view that the fall in prices was due to the shortage of gold, pointed out that the fall might easily be an apparent one, due to the fact that the increase of Limited Liability Companies diminished apparent profits, spreading them more widely; private shareholders looked for less return on their money than the manufacturing capitalists. Again, that same growth, by calling for

[1] These sixpenny pieces were called in.

a corresponding expansion of means of distribution, had profoundly affected the middleman class; and here also the Limited Liability Acts came into the field. Large "Stores" were in existence; and the shareholders in them were a kind of sleeping middlemen. This feature of English commercial life was already important enough to have attracted the notice of the taxation experts of the country.[1] Industrialism had not adjusted itself to the new weights it had to carry; and its periods of production were being governed rather by the call for dividends than by considerations of steady trade. It could not fail to be remarked at the same time that, as the spread of wealth had increased, the standard of living had gone up. In education, in material comforts, in amusements, the upper middle class were now approximating to the habits of Society; and the lower middle class, the smaller professional men and the shopkeepers, were coming into the position of the upper middle class. The consciousness of this, working in the artisan and the labourer, who had not yet shared as much in the growing wealth as in the spreading intelligence of the community, was no small element in the new uprising of labour, the new demands for something more than mere advancement of wages.

It is interesting to find in this very year of the Jubilee signs of another change, incalculable in effect. Compulsory education and the abolition of the stamp duty on newspapers had begun to make England a newspaper-reading nation. This had been seen in one respect in the influence which a newspaper agitation had had in the sending of Gordon to the Soudan.[2] In 1887 it disturbed the minds of the respectable by its obvious fruitfulness in new forms of gambling. In January one cheap print had set on foot the

[1] Elliot's *Life of Lord Goschen*, ii. 158.

[2] See page 124; and Mr G. W. E. Russell's *One Look Back*, p. 246.

form of competition which has ever since been readily worked into a craze; it offered prizes for discovering certain easy words in a series of pictures, the prizes to go to the first correct solution which happened to be opened. Other kinds of gambling due to the spread of newspapers appeared in the autumn. There was a riot at Lillie Bridge on 19th September, where a crowd of five or six thousand had gathered to see a race; the race did not take place, and the crowd wrecked the stands and railings of the ground, and burned the fragments. It was pretty well known that the stoppage of the race was really brought about to suit some betting-books[1]; and the riot drew attention, first, to the immense crowds which were attracted to sporting events, and, secondly, to the cheap newspapers which sent them there. The riot was followed by a police raid on a gambling club in London; and these were the first steps in a somewhat ineffectual attack during the late eighties and early nineties upon the betting tendencies of the workman. Another effect of cheap newspapers on ideas of sport was observed about this time. A famous old cricketer, signing himself "F. G.," wrote to *The Times*[2] to complain of a new school of cricket reporting which classified counties into first and second class counties, and talked of "championships" and "premierships"; the cricket enthusiast, he thought, was becoming a mere statistician, with "records" at his fingers' ends. The football mania had not yet begun; but the same spirit was evidently at work to create it.

The Jubilee, not overshadowed by parliamentary battles, was equally free of social shadows. The palpable existence of unemployment was rendered less pressing by the warmth of the summer weather; yet in various minor ways a certain financial pinch left its marks. Thus the trade in meat was slack, and the importers of the

[1] *The Times*, 24th September 1887.
[2] 5th September 1887.

chilled supply found it a depressing year; however it may be mentioned that even a depressed market now took 76,000 cwt. a month, which gives some measure of the growth of this industry in seven years. While we are on the subject of food, it may be mentioned that 1887 saw at last the passing of the Margarine Act, by which the word "margarine" had to be stamped on all packets containing that substance; the makers and purveyors had fought hard to alter the legal description to "butterine." If the meat market was not as good as a festival year seemed to imply, there were other means of jollity; and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced his next Budget he commented gratefully on the large increase in the product of the beer and spirit duties, which the Jubilee festivities had put into his pocket. Tobacco duties also were becoming more productive, and for this there was an interesting reason. Anyone who turns over the newspapers for 1887 will be struck by an outbreak of advertisements of cigarettes. Of course cigarettes had been smoked in England for some time previously, but they were still looked upon as rather outlandish. Mr Labouchere's incessant smoking of them was enough to mark him out, and the æsthetes affected them as a piece of elegance. It was not until about 1887 that their use became common; and the change had been caused by the Soudan expedition. Officers and men alike had learned to enjoy cigarettes in Egypt, and as they brought their new habit home it spread among people, both high and low, who would never have picked it up from the æsthete or the dandy.

An event of the summer which was almost as popular as the Jubilee was the "Wild West" Show at Brompton. Colonel Cody, with his romantic past of fighting Indians and his troupe of picturesque cowboys, became the rage. Even the most grown-up persons recalled their boyhood and went to see the show. Meanwhile a sign of some uneasiness about the standing amusements of London was

seen in the strong opposition to the application made this year by the Empire Theatre for a music-hall licence in place of its previous theatre licence; the application was granted, but not without a great deal of public criticism of the condition of music-hall entertainments.

Parliament had an unusually long session, and had not risen when, in September, a sudden violent occurrence took place in Ireland. But again the withdrawal of public interest showed itself in the comparative coolness and ease with which the Government were able to take the affair. A meeting at Mitchelstown, co. Cork, at which Mr Dillon was speaking, was turned into a riot by the determination of the police to force their official note-taker through the midst of the crowd. In the end three men were killed by rifle fire from the police barracks. Yet so little was the British public inclined to care for such things at the moment that Mr Balfour was able to answer indignant questions in the House by merely giving the police version of the affair; and even Mr Gladstone's cry, "Remember Mitchelstown," roused no one who would not have been ready to be roused by less tragic events.

Mr Balfour was able to carry out through the executive in Dublin the severest kind of repression. Some two hundred branches of the National League were suppressed; the Lord Mayor of Dublin was prosecuted for publishing in a newspaper, owned by him, reports of League meetings; Mr William O'Brien was sent to gaol as a common criminal for speaking at proclaimed meetings; Mr Wilfrid Blunt was similarly treated for trying to address a gathering on the Clanricarde estate. Mr O'Brien's refusal to wear prison dress drew some flippant attention, for his own clothes had been taken away, and his demand for their restoration was echoed in British jests about "O'Brien's trousers." Mr Blunt's arrest also caused a slight stir, because, being an English squire, he was appalled into strong language by the discovery that a policeman could positively

prevent him from making a speech. But otherwise no one in England paid much heed to Mr Balfour's rule; even though the Irish problem took one of its curious twists when in August there came loud complaints from Ulster because the large London Livery Companies, taking advantage of the Land Purchase Act, were clearing out of their Irish estates, and leaving to their fate all religious and charitable institutions to which, as landlords, they had hitherto subscribed. Private landlords were not clearing out in quite this conscienceless way; and indignant Ulstermen were inclined to question whether under the terms of the Plantation it was legal for the Livery Companies to act as they were acting. In any case Mr Balfour's policy did not interfere with the progress of the Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists towards coalition. One prominent Unionist, Sir George Trevelyan, had returned to the Gladstonians in May, when he knew that Mr Gladstone was not of fixed mind on the question of retaining Irish members at Westminster. Lord Hartington, on the other hand, was speaking more strongly than ever against all the proposed or hinted forms of self-government for Ireland, and against the Parnellite party. A flicker of the spirit of the previous year arose upon a speech by Sir George Trevelyan in July, which caused Liberal Unionists to ask him by what right he "took upon himself to excommunicate Bright, Hartington and Chamberlain." But the plain man's view of the situation was the true one: the coalition would take place by a process of driftings, and letters were even being written to the papers to prove that before common opposition to Home Rule united the two groups they had had a bond of union in a common policy, Mr Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill being almost as near together in democratic schemes as, say, Mr Goschen and Sir Michael Hicks Beach were in distrust of such schemes. Before the end of the year the Liberal Unionists held a great meeting which virtually amounted

to adherence to the Conservative side; and when Mr Chamberlain left England in December for New York, to act as British Commissioner in the Canadian Fisheries dispute, he was not only taking a post offered by Lord Salisbury, but was also arranging a convenient absence, on the further side of which he might with less emphasis take the final step of severance from his old party. It is curious, considering how events developed sixteen years later, that at this time one of the reasons given by the Tory newspapers for welcoming Mr Chamberlain was that he and his Liberal Unionist allies might be expected to counteract a tendency towards Protection in the Conservative party. The Fair Trade cry had been, after all, less damaged by its defeats at the polls than many people thought, and it was vigorous towards the end of the year. The papers which deplored it as a reactionary movement looked to the democratic ideas of Mr Chamberlain as a useful influence against it.

Nothing that modern retrospect can add would make the Home Rule split more serious, more damaging, than it was at the time. Yet we can perceive now concurrent effects of it unperceived at the time. Events had so fallen that both Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr Chamberlain were out of office, and out of influence, at a time when a politician in any sort of touch with the working poor might have diverted the whole course of social history. As it was, the world at large continued to satisfy itself by mentally separating the socialist speaker from the mass of working people. The latter, politicians thought they understood. When in May a deputation of pit-brow women waited upon the Home Secretary to protest against the attempt which was being made to put a stop to the work of women at colliery pit-mouths, he expressed his readiness to accede to their views, and rejoiced in the opportunity of showing that a Conservative Government was open to the reasoned requests of labour.

When the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress decided in June against taking part in an International Conference of Labour they were commended for maintaining the independence of the British artisan, and keeping him clear of associations with foreign workmen who founded their programme upon more State intervention than men in this country demanded.[1] Nor was there any misgiving about the conference in the autumn on the conditions of working women, when a strong committee, on which Miss Maude Stanley, Mrs Barnett, Mrs Hickford, Mrs Allison, Mrs Verney, Canon Barnett, Lord Meath, Mr G. R. Sims and Professor Stuart served, met to consider the relation of women's work to social life, and more specifically the hours, wages and conditions of women's work. This conference, again, was largely due to a novel of Walter Besant's, *Children of Gibeon*, which had depicted the circumstances of sweated women in the East End; Besant served as honorary treasurer of the committee. All these movements were supposed to be separable from London street meetings, which again began to be troublesome in October. In one sense they were separable; even William Morris himself was thinking at this time that the free speech campaign was beginning to take on an importance of its own, apart from the subject of the speaking. He thought he discerned in the leaders of the campaign a desire to figure as heroes.[2] But in the deeper sense there was no line of division. What was happening was the birth of a new school of labour aspiration, which was not satisfied to see all political economy brushed aside, because the individualist form of it had been dethroned. The tendency of even thoughtful men in other classes just now was to replace political science by a humanitarian spirit in administration; and the knowledge that such a spirit was abroad made men the more ready to be

[1] *The Times*, 15th June 1887.

[2] Mackail's *Life of William Morris*, ii. 179.

impatient with the London street meetings. As these meetings had become a battle-ground the socialist leaders were disposed to keep them going; they could not be blamed for seeing the opportunity. Having tried to hold one in Trafalgar Square, and caused the authorities to take action on the somewhat absurd legal point that the Square was Crown territory, and could therefore be arbitrarily closed, the socialists called a large meeting in Hyde Park on 20th October, and thence led a mass of men as a deputation to the Home Office; the police devoted themselves to riding constantly through and through the marching men, and breaking up the ranks. Two or three days later, on a Sunday, there was a march of the unemployed to Westminster Abbey. Some months earlier they had similarly attended service in St Paul's; on both occasions the men sat for the most part quite quietly amid the nervous congregation, though one or two shouted remarks during the sermon. The closing of Trafalgar Square was rescinded, and a meeting was held there on 24th October, after which men paraded the West End streets, but nothing occurred beyond the excusable panic of the shopkeepers. Hyndman had issued a programme of demands, including an eight hours' day in all Government workshops, the opening to cultivation of all waste lands in Crown or Government possession, and the establishment of relief works at State or local charges. For the moment the reopening of Trafalgar Square appeared to have had its effect in causing the demonstrations there to dwindle by the removal of a grievance. But some arrests in the Square early in November for using threatening language led to a fresh prohibition of meetings there, and the result was the fight of "Bloody Sunday," 13th November. The unemployed and their leaders made a determined attack on the Square, which was held by a strong barrier of police. Police vedettes met the oncoming processions from every direction, and had broken them

up before they reached the main cordon. The chief fight took place at the corner of the Strand. "No one who saw it will ever forget the strange and indeed terrible sight of that grey winter day, the vast, sombre-coloured crowd, the brief but fierce struggle at the corner of the Strand, and the river of steel and scarlet that moved slowly through the dusky swaying masses, when two squadrons of the Life Guards were summoned up from Whitehall." [1] Before the columns of the unemployed were finally headed off, the upper side of the Square was lined by a battalion of Foot Guards with bayonets fixed and ball cartridge in their pouches. After the affray two of the stoutest fighters remained in custody—Cunninghame Graham, then a Member of Parliament, and John Burns. For weeks the alarm caused by this wild scene lasted; special constables were enrolled as for a revolution, and Trafalgar Square was held daily by pickets of police. There was no further attack; but there was one other socialist manifestation. In December a man named Alfred Linnell, who had been injured in the fight, died. His funeral on 18th December was attended by a huge but perfectly orderly crowd, and William Morris and Henry Quelch, of the Social Democratic Federation, spoke at the graveside. Cunninghame Graham, John Burns, the Rev. Stewart Headlam, and Mrs Annie Besant were in the procession. No one knew what effect a man's death might have on the agitation; it made an anxious close to the year. Moreover in the Western Isles of Scotland the crofters were raiding the deer forests, declaring they were starving, and the tithe riots in Wales had not ceased.

In December the British public learned for the first time where the real wealth of gold in the Transvaal lay. A Board of Trade report on the Witwatersrand district was published on 15th December. The Rand had been pro-

[1] Mackail's *Life of William Morris*, ii. 191.

claimed a goldfield in March, but for all effective purposes the secret had been kept until the industry was under way; and by this time eighty or ninety companies had been registered in connection with the Rand, and 1400 stamps were already working. The discovery of the gold there was attributed to a Mr Struben, an Englishman long resident in Johannesburg.[1] Smaller fields still continued to be opened up, as at Luipaard's Vlei; and altogether the export of gold from South Africa was expected to approach £200,000 in this year; in 1885 it had been £69,543. A hint of the monopolising of wealth by a large ring at work in South Africa was given by the announcement in August 1887 that the De Beers Company were buying out the French Diamond Mining Company at Kimberley. A mining subject of a somewhat different kind had caused scandal in political quarters in the summer. The recent annexation of Burma had brought under British control the rich ruby mines which had belonged to King Theebaw. It became known that a lease to work these mines was being granted, and there were circumstances connected with the grant which caused Lord Cross, the Secretary for India, to cut short the pending negotiations, and reserve the subject for inquiry.

Late in the year the final stage of an undertaking, which has made several appearances in these pages, was inaugurated. The first sod of the Manchester Ship Canal was cut on 11th November at Eastham Ferry by Lord Egerton of Tatton. Shares to the value of five millions had been issued in the summer, three millions having been taken up in Lancashire before the prospectus was published for the second time,[2] and Barings and Rothschilds had underwritten a considerable amount. The raising of the three millions was a fine piece of local patriotism.

[1] It has also been attributed to Sir J. B. Robinson.

[2] See p. 186.

CHAPTER X

1888: THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

IN the year 1888 it seemed that the many currents of restlessness—the restlessness not only of working people and the people on the "starvation line," but of educated and thoughtful people also in regard to the responsibilities of citizenship—were producing a genuine effect. The body politic of England stirred uneasily, and could not quite go to sleep again. There was no cause for anxieties abroad. For the moment our relations with France were patched up; in October 1887 the Government had announced simultaneously the conclusion of an agreement neutralising the Suez Canal in time of war, and the withdrawal of all French claims on the New Hebrides.[1] Germany lay under a double oppression: her famous old Emperor William, first wearer of the crown of a united Germany, was at the end of his long life (he died on 9th March); and his heir, the Crown Prince who had taken all London's eyes in the Jubilee procession, was a stricken man. He only reigned three months, dying on 15th June, of cancer in the throat.

So England practically spent the year with its own conscience. In January the horrors of sweated labour were for the first time systematically revealed by a Board of Trade report, coinciding with the work of the private committee investigating the conditions of women's industry. The subject was approached without

[1] See page 103. The subject of the New Hebrides had provided the liveliest passages of discussion at the Colonial Conference. See *The Times*, 27th July 1887.

any sentimental excess. Sweating was diagnosed as an evil largely due to the extreme subdivision of labour in certain trades; for instance, a single subdivision of the tailor's trade, coatmaking, was further subdivided into the work of cutters, basters, machinists, pressers, fellers, buttonhole makers, and general workers. It was urged on behalf of the various sub-contractors in trades so divided that they worked as hard as any of the grades below them, and that care should be taken to distinguish between a system itself and excesses in a system. When Lord Dunraven a month later raised the question in the House of Lords, and obtained the appointment of a Select Committee, the same careful spirit was at work; the mere system of manufacture of cheap clothing (which was the trade mostly impugned) was, after all, it was said, the same as the system in other industrial work; cheap pens and cheap cotton goods were equally made possible by subdivision of labour; and with an export trade of four millions a year in clothing it behoved reformers to be cautious. An increase of inspectors might be desirable. But was it not a matter in which a general improvement of tone in the community would be the only valid method of reform? So sharply was public attention roused that the Salvation Army was attacked for producing, by its charitable system of providing work for those in need of food and shelter, an undercutting of the market in laundry-work and match-making; the accusation was strenuously denied. The subject ran off into all sorts of side-issues. Was the middleman to be blamed? But the middleman must be a necessary and not uneconomic link in the social fabric. Was alien immigration a chief source of sweating? But, if that were stopped, would the underpaid work be refused by English people? Was not the fault as much with the purchaser as with anybody else? No direct legislation against sweating would avail, if the purchaser insisted on extreme cheapness. The

private committee on women's work formed itself into a larger and more immediately philanthropic body, called the Women's Protective and Provident League, which was active in collecting evidence for the Select Committee. A more important step was taken in July, when the match-making girls of a large factory in the East End were encouraged to strike by the outcry against sweating; Miss Clementina Black at once devoted herself to forming a Match-makers' Union; the girls won their fight themselves, and wrote a new chapter in the history of women's labour. It was altogether no wonder that in the autumn Lord Sydney Godolphin Osborne should express rather sombre gratification in the reflection that at last some knowledge of the awful conditions of the East End and of provincial slums was penetrating an England which with these horrors at its doors went on subscribing half-a-million a year for foreign missions, spent its money lavishly on the building of a Church House,[1] and its time on a Pan-Anglican conference of bishops from all over the world.

The sarcastic implication of this reflection, as well as its main purport, was thoroughly in the spirit of the year. In religious matters too the nation was singularly stirred. A focussing point for much new thought, some of it very yeasty, was provided by the publication early in April of a novel, *Robert Elsmere*, by Mrs Humphry Ward. Reference has been made to that conflict between divines and men of science, which arose out of enthusiastic acceptance of the evolutionary theory, and was sharply revived in the eighties by the death of Charles Darwin and the consequent recapitulation of his achievements. As it happened, the controversy found the Church of England in a phase of slight, perhaps too slight, attention to purely doctrinal and historical work. That had become associated chiefly with the Tractarians; and in the reaction against

[1] The Church House at Westminster was begun in 1887, after a great deal of discussion.

High Church methods and practices, which centred in F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley, there had been a tendency to feel that ecclesiastical learning was not altogether a healthy pursuit. To show to the world that passion for the poor and afflicted, devotion to parish work, and zealous care of souls were not necessarily bound up with a sacramental interpretation of priesthood and an ascetic life tending to monasticism, was the object of the Maurice group; and as the priestliness and asceticism were founded on the historical teachings of the Tractarians, the group had a tendency to avoid learning which was, so to speak, technical Church learning. The muscular curate was the prevailing type of young clergyman. When the attack came, when new scientific schools of thought, new theories of the origin of life, assailed the whole Christian cosmogony, and thereby raised the searching problem of Christian evidences, men of religious faith retired into more than one camp. The High Church, secure in its own mysticism, held no parley at all from its citadel. Churchmen of the Maurice and Kingsley type became the Broad Church, and started throwing up earthworks to enclose a portion of the debatable ground, from whence they might answer the shots aimed at them; in other words, they rationalised certain regions of evidence, especially in the Old Testament. Meanwhile a strong intellectual movement among lay churchmen rationalised the whole body of Christianity, and these people, ceasing thereby in mere honesty to call themselves churchmen, yet called themselves Christians. The Evangelicals, with a section of Nonconformity (one portion of which was in the broadest Church position), rejecting the extreme ground of the mystics, battled faithfully with the exponents of the higher criticism, and gave not the least convincing proof of the reality of their religious feeling in the firmness with which they refused to yield an inch of ground. A controversy of some fame took place just at this time; Dr Henry Wace,

Principal of King's College, London, engaged in an argumentative duel with Professor Huxley in the pages of *The Nineteenth Century*, and this type of discussion never received a better summing-up than on this occasion. The question of the origin of life seriously disturbed dinner-parties, and protoplasm was a word that could destroy the friendships of years. If the theologians' position showed some obstinacy, the scientists on their side laid themselves open to the biting comment that "nothing is infallible now, except science." Floating somewhat vaguely in the welter was the recent school of taste in art and life. Æstheticism in its worst aspect offered a cynical kind of support to the Ritualists; in its best it held a large part of the intellectual world aloof from destructive criticism and from an exaggerated emphasis on the exercise of the intellect.

Matthew Arnold, who had, if often indirectly, borne so large a part in this drastic reconsideration of belief, hardly lived to see it become (though the phrase is rather inappropriate) a popular affair. He died on 16th April, just after Mrs Ward, whose uncle he was, had published her novel. Mr Gladstone found himself at leisure to take up the ecclesiastical discussions which always interested him even more than politics; and an article by him on this novel [1] set all the country talking. It is ancient history now; the modern world would not be stirred by the spectacle of a parish priest, who has resigned his living owing to an inability to believe in miracles, founding in the East End a sect based on an indeterminate mixture of Positivism, social enthusiasm, and sacramental phrases without the Sacraments. But the appearance of the book remains a monument of that searching of the social conscience which had so strikingly come to light every now and then in the early eighties, and in 1888 was the predominant influence.

Housing reform was at work. Large private benefactions

[1] In *The Nineteenth Century*, 1888.

were being projected to supplement the work of public bodies, and at least one great ground landlord, whose leases were falling in, was setting aside, in his plans for rebuilding, sites for workmen's dwellings.[1] Educational reform was advanced a stage in this year by the Report of the Royal Commission on the Education Acts. It had nothing to say about making education entirely free, though Mr Chamberlain in his new surroundings maintained that ideal more frankly than any other part of his former Radical programme. The commission was indeed Conservative in essence, a majority of fifteen supporting the voluntary school system and recommending a development of religious education, from which a minority of five, including Sir John Lubbock, Mr Lyulph Stanley and Dr Dale dissented. But on more general topics some useful recommendations were made, as, for instance, that teachers' salaries should be fixed, instead of being dependent on the grant; and that, while the system of payment by results in the Government grant could not be entirely abolished, it might be subject to much relaxation. An improvement of the training colleges was also recommended. A movement was on foot earlier in the year to ease the conditions under which elementary schools might enter on technical education. It was beginning to be felt that it would be difficult to lay down the line at which elementary education ends and technical instruction should begin, so that the sounder policy might be a wide and deep improvement of elementary education. The Associated Chambers of Commerce, on the other hand, preferred that the two forms of teaching should be kept separate. The subject in general had a year of helpful ventilation and discussion.

Events had so fallen out that the chief parliamentary work of 1888 was also in the spirit of the year. The Local Government Bill gave the representative principle a new sphere hitherto occupied by non-elective authorities.

[1] Lord Cadogan, on his Chelsea estates.

Not only had "the era of administration" come, but the power of administration was placed within reach of all. Until this time the authority in the counties had been the justices in Quarter Sessions; it was now to be a body similar to the great popular municipalities, elected on the same household suffrage, with some modifications, such as the removal of the disqualification of clergymen and ministers. But more important still from the democratic point of view was the amount of delegation of work which the Bill was framed to permit. Practically all county work might be delegated to committees, with the provision that they must report to the council, and that the council had the sole power of expenditure. Two committees were compulsory under the Bill—the Finance Committee (which was not only a watching committee, as in the existing municipalities, but an estimating committee, without whose sanction no sum over fifty pounds could be expended); and a Standing Joint Committee, formed of councillors and justices, for police purposes. But any number of other committees might be formed, and in order to save wasteful expenditure from overlapping in such matters as drainage, roads, etc., a council might unite with other councils in setting up joint committees with delegated powers. The result of all the delegation was that the council as a whole need not meet often (four meetings a year was the statutory minimum), and thus membership was open to men who had not much time to spare from their work, and at the same time county business was not hampered with incessant debating. A general county rate was authorised by the Bill. The Bill did not apply to Ireland; but Liberal Unionists congratulated themselves on having an instrument the possible extension of which might undermine the Home Rule movement. Conservatives indeed regarded the measure as savouring far too strongly of Liberal Unionism, and the Government had to face much resentment among

their supporters in the country. Tory critics pointed out that administration by Quarter Sessions had been economical, fairly efficient, and, above all, free from jobbery. Other critics, while more friendly to the principle, objected that much more ought to have been done to unify rating, that interference with the old control of the police might endanger the efficiency of the service, that triennial elections were not frequent enough to keep up local interest, and so on. Liberals regretted the exclusion of Poor Law administration from the work of the new councils; but the creation of a County of London, with the consequent abolition of the Metropolitan Board of Works, was no small consolation to them. All was going well with the Bill, when suddenly a controversy sprang up on the clauses detailing the licensing powers of the new authority. The councils were to be allowed to refuse the renewal of licences to public-houses, on payment of compensation to the licence-holder. Temperance reformers detected danger in the implication contained in this clause, that an interest in a licence was a valuable interest; they maintained hotly that a licence was an annual grant, and that the licensing authority had a right in any year to refuse renewal. Less extreme men were puzzled by the absence of any basis for computation of the value of a licence. Brewers and licence-holders for their part disliked any change which would place them under new and popularly elected bodies. So great an outcry arose from all these conflicting interests that the Government decided to withdraw the licensing clauses altogether. The Bill then made a prosperous passage, and was law before the House rose in August.

The licensed victualling trade was at a critical point in its history. We have recorded the first large brewery flotation, that of Guinness's, in 1886. Others followed, notably that of Samuel Allsopp & Sons, in February 1887, with a capital of £1,100,000; and that of Bass, Ratcliff

& Gretton, in January 1888, with a capital of £2,720,000. For some time breweries all over the kingdom had been buying public-houses, in order to avoid the expense and uncertainty of constant competition for the custom of licensed victuallers. The possession of a large number of licensed premises gave a brewery a regular and steady trade. But the acquisition of them was an extremely expensive affair, and the standard of price for such premises constantly rose. Brewing firms had therefore been obliged to raise a large number of mortgages and loans, and had only been waiting for an easy investment market to come to the public for capital to consolidate these liabilities. It was natural that they should at the same time decide to put their businesses under the Limited Liability Acts; the old private partnership was apt to be a tiresome arrangement in businesses so large in scale. But apart from the legal and financial convenience of limited liability the only object which it was wise to have in view was the consolidation of the mortgages and loans. Even a moderate call for new ordinary capital would not have done any harm. But the Guinness flotation had been so eagerly taken up, and brewing profits at the moment were such a temptation to the investor, that some breweries put their whole capital on the market. The two courses of action were exemplified in the cases of Allsopp's and Bass's. The former brewery offered all classes of its shares for subscription; the public demand was almost entirely for the ordinary and preference shares. Bass's on the other hand kept the ordinary and preference shares in the possession of the old shareholders, and offered the public £910,000 of debentures. They were taking the course that really represented the actual requirements of breweries at the time; Allsopp's were using the opportunity of those requirements for a wholly different operation.

The amount of money waiting for investment was enormous. The application for Allsopp's shares amounted

to something like a hundred millions, and Bass's debentures were issued at 107 per cent. The rush of prospectuses was becoming so lively as to cause a fresh scrutiny of the limited liability laws, and a fear that the company promoter was not sufficiently under control. Suggestions were made that the law should demand two registrations, an initial one, which might be easy enough to keep the ball rolling, and a final one of a much more stringent kind in respect to paid-up capital and the proportion borne to it by preliminary expenses. Besides brewery flotations, this year saw also the formation of several Trusts, the chief one being the Cheshire Salt Trust, with a capital of three millions; and—a more exciting affair—the beginning of the South African gold "boom." The industry on the Rand was going ahead fast. The gold exports for a single month (February) were £75,647—more than the whole year's export in 1885; and from the Rand alone the export for March was 14,706 oz., and for April 15,853 oz. There seemed to be no cloud on the promising outlook. An article in *The Times* [1] on the Rand conditions dwelt on the absence of any disturbance such as the inrush of capitalists and labour had been expected to produce. President Kruger had appointed as Landrost of the district not a Boer unlikely to be in sympathy with the work, but a naturalised Austrian "of agreeable manners"; and the Englishmen on the Rand were saying that they were better off than at Cape Town. The monthly output by the end of the year was about 21,000 oz., though it was believed that for private reasons a good deal of gold was being kept back.[2] The connection which has already been spoken of between the new goldfield and the immensely wealthy diamond mines of South Africa came out clearly at a meeting of the Goldfields of South Africa Ltd. in

[1] 22nd May 1888.

[2] Board of Trade Report on the Witwatersrand. Published 17th December 1888.

October, when the shareholders expressed themselves as so confident in the gold industry that they wished to get rid of their De Beers shares, and put the money into the Rand. De Beers had in May amalgamated with the Kimberley Central Diamond Mining Company, and was now a virtual monopoly.

The already prolific output of the Rand took the wind from the sails of the Currency Commission's report, which was published in November. The commission was equally divided in its recommendations, neither of which was original. One half recommended the issue of banknotes of small values; the other half were for the bimetallist solution, and for an international agreement fixing the ratio at which coins of either metal should be available for the payment of debts, at the option of the debtor. No action was taken on the report. The Treasury was otherwise occupied, for Mr Goschen, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had decided to carry out compulsorily the conversion of the Three-per-cents., which Mr Childers had attempted on voluntary lines in 1884. That attempt had not been useless. The twenty millions or so of stock, which had since that time borne $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. interest instead of 3 per cent., afforded an extremely useful indication of the real position of public credit; they stood at 102. It was obvious that, if the lower rate of interest could still command a premium, it was absurd for the country to be going on paying 3 per cent. The fact that municipalities had been reconsidering their rate of interest must also have influenced Mr Goschen. In 1887 the Birmingham Corporation found its $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. stock standing at a premium of 3 to $4\frac{1}{2}$; and decided that the issue it was about to make should be at 3 per cent. only. It had obtained for an issue late in the year an average price of £98, 15s. Consequently Mr Goschen had double reason to feel confidence in the lowering of the national rate of interest, and he did not hesitate to apply it to the whole of

the national stock. His Budget of 1888 contained a scheme by which five hundred and fifty-eight millions of Three-per-cents. were to fall after the current year to $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., and after a further fourteen years to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., at which they were to stand for twenty years. Some portion of the stock could legally be converted without notice; and in order to induce stockholders who were entitled to notice to bring their holdings rapidly into the scheme, Mr Goschen offered a premium of 5s. per £100 on stock converted before 12th April, and also a brokerage of 1s. 6d. per £100 to brokers converting before that date. The result was that by 12th April the new stock amounted to four hundred and fifty millions, and the success of the scheme was assured. It too had profited by the better business conditions.

To say, as we have said, that this was a year in which the public conscience was stirred must not be allowed to carry too sombre an implication. The passion of the year for coster songs (" 'E's all right when you know 'im, But you've got to know 'im fust " was of this date) reveals depths of innocent ease. Strenuous ideas, social conventions, had in many directions been relaxed. People of exalted birth were going almost ostentatiously into trade; impoverished younger sons were taking positions in city businesses, and noble ladies were opening millinery shops. With the decline of fashionable æstheticism, artists had taken to dressing in the ordinary smart clothes of men about town, and velvet and long hair were no more the mode. The New Gallery, opened this year, found itself taking over from the Grosvenor Gallery a school of taste in art which had already become respectably traditional; and Mr Whistler had so far ceased to infuriate the ordinary citizen that he had become to *Punch* " the licensed Vistler." Advanced artistic taste was now occupying itself with William Morris's special gospel of " reasonable labour," and work in which the workman could take interest. The Arts and Crafts Guild, which had been

founded in 1884, held this year its first exhibition. The restoration of the individual hand and brain to the chief place in manufacture was destined, in Morris's view, to chasten industrial art, wherein the domination of the machine was producing a gulf betwixt utility and ornamentation; the latter was becoming an excrescence, and increasingly meaningless in design.

The great excitement of the summer was the railway "Race to the North." It began in July, when the London & North-Western and Caledonian Railways announced an eight-and-a-half-hours run to Edinburgh. As the journey had been one of ten hours this was an effective advertisement; but the Great Northern and North-Eastern Railways promptly replied by announcing an eight-hours run. The North-Western and Caledonian did the same early in August; and the race hit the public fancy. Men surrendered like children to the fascination of railway engines; and rejoiced in this colossal duel of locomotive monsters, hurtling across England through the night, and pantingly comparing times in Edinburgh in the morning. After the respective routes had shaved down their difference to a matter of a minute or two, the rivals took a rest, and the public travelled by whichever route it had backed. Historically the principal interest of the struggle lies in the obvious deduction that the passenger traffic to Scotland was becoming very valuable; which is another indication of the spread of wealth in the middle classes, and the readiness to expend it. Scientifically too the race had a special interest. Such tremendous rates of speed with such heavy loads meant firstly that the modern engineering tools had succeeded in producing large surfaces with a minimum of liability to destructive friction, and secondly that Bessemer steel rails would bear an astonishing amount of shock and strain.

The other craze of the summer was neither useful nor scientific. It was in 1888 that Mr Baldwin first performed

the feat of dropping from a balloon with a parachute, which opened as he fell and floated him to earth. It gave a fresh impetus to the rather failing interest in ballooning.

Electric lighting had at length made the advance which enabled it to take its share in the busy company-promoting of the year. House-to-house supply had been rendered possible, and at the same time an Act was passed extending the duration of Provisional Electric Lighting Orders to forty-two years. This made the enterprise commercially profitable, and two companies were at once formed in London. They prudently undertook districts which contained enough theatres, clubs, and large hotels to secure a steady consumption—the districts of Pall Mall, St James's and St Martin-in-the-Fields. A new process for making aluminium, reducing the cost from forty shillings a pound to about fifteen shillings a pound; more experiments with a "spirit motor"; and a successful employment of wax instead of tinfoil for the cylinders of phonographs, were minor activities of the inventors. Phonographs of the new kind were a great interest of the year.

The Local Government Bill was the only parliamentary business to which the public paid much heed. The movement for setting up a Department of Agriculture was revived, and, as was natural, began to have more weight under a Government strong in the landed interest. Reform of the House of Lords was in the air. The case of a peer who had been warned off the turf late in 1887 had led *The Times* to remark that such a case brought us "nearer to the highly necessary reform of the House of Lords"; but a motion in the House by Lord Rosebery proposing a Second Chamber of 200 members, some elected by the Peers, others by the town and county councils, others provided by an increase of life peerages, was but tamely debated, and was rejected by a majority of more than two to one. However, a few Conservative peers and several Liberal Unionist peers voted for it. The real interest of

the session, after the Local Government Bill, was a vivid recrudescence in the House of Commons of Irish controversy. Since his complete denial of the authenticity of the letter published in *The Times* in April 1887 Parnell, true to his constant disregard of English opinion, and little inclined, in a state of poor health, to give himself trouble, had taken no further steps in the matter. He had declined all advice to proceed against *The Times* for libel. But at the end of 1887 a member of his party, finding what he considered to be ground for action on his own part in the articles on "Parnellism and Crime," had entered a libel suit. It came on for trial in July 1888, and a verdict was given against him. The trial was used to strike another blow at Parnell. Counsel for *The Times* was the Attorney-General; and in consequence, when he produced and read in court further incriminating letters alleged to have been signed by Parnell, his speech was not far removed from an official indictment. Even Parnell could hardly treat this with contempt, and he moved in the House of Commons for a Select Committee. The Government offered him instead a commission of three judges, set up by an Act of Parliament. Feeling in the House ran very strong [1]; it was said by the Liberals and the Irish that the proposal to set the Bench to work meant the hope of a prejudiced English verdict, and when the Bill was found to empower the commission to consider charges against "other persons" besides Parnell there was great indignation at the idea of placing virtually the whole question of Irish government before a legal tribunal. Mr Gladstone was in his most impassioned mood, and the committee stage of the Bill was marked by violent scenes in the House. The temper of Irish Nationalist members had been rather hot throughout the year. They were indignant at what they considered an insulting nonchalance in Mr Balfour, and from the beginning of the session they had accused him of deliberately absenting

[1] *Cf.* Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 390.

himself from the House when Irish questions bulked largely on the notice paper. This smouldering resentment was partly responsible for the violence that accompanied the Parnell Commission Bill debates. The world outside cannot be said to have cared very much about the details of the affair, and when the commission met, in October 1888, no one paid great attention to the immense production of evidence. The terms of reference to the commission practically necessitated an examination into the speeches of Irish members and all disturbing events in Ireland for years past. Nor was there even as much popular interest as there would have been a few years later, when it was announced that Mr Cecil Rhodes, an ex-Cabinet Minister in Cape Colony, and a principal shareholder in De Beers, had been in correspondence with Parnell, and, in order to mark his view of Home Rule as a possible commencement of Devolution and Imperial Federation, had subscribed £10,000 to the Irish party funds. Mr Rhodes expressed his own conviction, from his experience with the Dutch in Cape Colony, that the difficulty of the loyal minority in Ulster was one that would settle itself.

Parliament assembled for an autumn sitting. It had an Employers' Liability Bill to deal with, modifying the doctrine of "common employment" in the workman's favour, introducing the responsibility of sub-contractors, and extending the benefits to seamen. Mr Chamberlain was evidently making his presence felt in the Coalition, for this was one of the measures of his Radical days. The session was also notable for some changes in procedure; the House began meeting at three o'clock in the afternoon, instead of at four o'clock, and the Standing Committees on Law and Trade, which had been allowed to lapse, were again set up. This revived the idea of an Estimates Committee, but a Conservative Government was not likely to take so new a step. Its advocates found some cogent arguments in the agitation which was beginning about the defences of the

country. It was clear that there would be strong pressure to increase the Naval Estimates, and an Estimates Committee might, it was pleaded, bring about that co-ordination of naval and military expenditure which was surely to be desired. The pressure was fully at work in a meeting at the Mansion House in May, when Admiral Hornby asked if England was really able to keep the sea; and gave as his own reply the opinion that she would require 186 cruisers for the purpose. A committee had reported upon the state of the defences of our naval ports, and, cautious as its official phrases were, men discerned in the report a real concern about the existing circumstances. In every suburban railway carriage of a morning the navy, new battleships, new men, new methods, were the prevailing topic of conversation; and Lord Charles Beresford, who had made a fighting reputation for himself at the bombardment of Alexandria, and Lord Randolph Churchill raised the subject on every possible occasion. The celebrations of the tercentenary of the Armada were a rallying ground for the agitators; they were also an early instance of the local pageant, for the historic game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe was re-enacted, and was followed by a procession of all the sovereigns of England. The discussion of our defences gave some prominence also to an agitation persistent throughout these years for giving better attention to the Volunteer movement, which was feeling itself neglected and very inadequately supported in funds by the War Office. This year saw it in peculiar difficulty owing to the necessity of abandoning its old training and shooting ground at Wimbledon. A year or two passed before it was in possession of new ground at Bisley. Volunteers, it may be remarked, were introducing cycling into their service, but the high bicycle did not lend itself well to such uses.

In the world of labour there was a singular lull. To some extent, no doubt, the better trade conditions had absorbed unemployed labour; and street meetings were

not so severely under the ban of the police. Organisation was taking the energies of the most prominent labour leaders, and the Independent Labour Party was set on foot. The removal of all restrictions upon combination was the one item of the International Trade Union Congress upon which there was harmony. But the year is chiefly remarkable in this connection for the appearance of a newspaper which, though not formally associated with the labour movement, aimed at becoming a power among working men. This newspaper was *The Star*, a halfpenny evening paper, first published in January 1888. Several towns in the north had had such papers for some time; and London had one, *The Echo*, designed like *The Star* to be a democratic organ. But *The Echo* displayed a rather undiluted idealism, which tended to limit its public to men already possessing energetic political opinions. The purpose of *The Star* was rather, by providing an attractive and readable staple of news, to instil politics and other interests of the mind into readers who would never buy a paper for such things in the first place. It appealed also to the new generation at large, by starting with a galaxy of subversive talent in its staff of critics. Mr Bernard Shaw contributed the musical criticism, Mr Walkley, the dramatic, Mr John Davidson, and later Mr Richard Le Gallienne, the literary criticism.

December brought round again a deputation of unemployed men to the Lord Mayor, but no one expected a very anxious winter. Public alarm about the East End was given a very different, and a much more gruesome, turn; the notorious Whitechapel murders began this autumn. A woman was found murdered in the backyard of a house in Whitechapel on 31st August, and another on 8th September; two more similar murders took place on 30th September, and on 15th October the incident occurred which introduced a peculiar horror, the police receiving postcards and letters signed "Jack the Ripper." The mutilations

which accompanied the murders were atrocious, and seemed to prove that they were all the work of one man, and that he must have had a training in surgery. It was incredible that such things should continue with the hue and cry that was raised, and yet a fifth murder took place on 8th November. They even continued into 1889, and then the terrible series suddenly came to an end. The perpetrator was never brought to justice.

At the end of the year news arrived of Stanley's progress on the expedition for the relief of Emin Pasha. The news was a whole year late; the messages received from him reported the expedition safe and well in November 1887. As a matter of fact, reports had already reached England which rather dimmed the satisfaction. Stanley had left part of his force under Major Barttelot encamped at a certain point, to maintain his communications. He had trusted to a well-known chief of an Arab tribe, Tippoo Tib, an old slave-raider, to supply the camp with provisions, and Tippoo Tib had undertaken to do so. He failed to keep his word, and in July rumours had come to England that Barttelot and his force were in the greatest straits. In October word came of Barttelot's death, and no one knew then where Stanley was. The messages from him in November were followed by some in December, from Zanzibar, to the effect that the meeting between Stanley and Emin had taken place in January 1888, and that both were safe.

Just at the time when this happy appendix was being placed to the history of the Soudan war, there was fighting once more at Suakin. Sir F. Grenfell was in command in Egypt, and he inflicted a defeat upon some dervish forces which had been inclined to press Suakin too closely. The battle revived in England discussion of our position at Suakin, but Lord Salisbury made no declaration of policy beyond the determination to retain the place.

CHAPTER XI

1889: LONDON AND LABOUR FACE TO FACE

IT was natural that after a year such as 1888 men should come to the next with good heart. Trade was cheerful, and may for the moment stand personified in jolly Colonel North, then at the height of his fame, spending his money on his great house at Eltham, on his greyhounds, and on large genial benefactions—a millionaire playing up to his character. The Stock Exchange found the way to middle-class pockets, and the investors who had surrendered to the fascinations of the brewery boom and the gold boom were ready for all sorts of further adventures. An underground railway from St James's Street to Holborn Circus, with a capital of £750,000; a tramway, working on the conduit system in an experimental stage at Northfleet, Kent; a number of electric light companies; an amalgamation of the two chief telephone companies—the National and the United—into one concern, with an enlarged capital; and an incessant conversion of private trading companies into limited liability concerns—all flooded the market with prospectuses, but did not exhaust the money awaiting investment. Another sign of the greater distribution of wealth is to be found in Mr Goschen's Budget speech of the year, when he pleaded for a new policy of taxing a much greater number of articles of consumption, since the old policy of taxing a small number no longer spread taxation fairly according to wealth.[1] There were also indications of prosperity, however deplorable from the strictly ethical point of view, in the steady increase of the return from duties on intoxicants, which helped to keep up the Budget surpluses of

[1] Elliot's *Life of Lord Goschen*, ii. 158.

these years, and in the growth of betting and gambling. This latter subject greatly exercised respectable minds at this time; raids upon gambling clubs by the police were frequent; the Convocation of Canterbury had a report on the subject made to it by a committee; and legislation was vaguely demanded. It was felt that clubs were not the only point at which the police might strike. Cheaper newspapers had produced so large a betting population that a regular professional class of bookmakers had sprung up to meet the requirements of those who were from their circumstances unable to go to race meetings, but found in betting from newspaper reports the kind of excitement which could colour their monotonous lives by being crammed into factory dinner-hours. Meanwhile one of the countless prospectuses of the year can be seen now to have been a promise of yet more cheap newspapers to come; it asked for a capital to run wood-pulp paper-mills in Norway.

Some moralists, contemplating this result of newspaper reading, were inclined to deplore the teaching of so many people to read. But on the whole the movement for free education advanced strongly, with the argument that, if education had led to difficulties, this only meant that education must be fuller. The Technical Education Act was passed this year, with very little discussion; its provisions have been already noted.[1] In this year also University "Extension" teaching took a new form; a meeting of Extension Students at Oxford had been tried as an experiment in the summer of 1888, and had been so successful that it was now decided to establish the idea on a more complete and definite scale. Courses of lectures were to be so arranged that students could come into residence for either a fortnight or a month at choice; and in the more continuous association of tutors and students the extension system would acquire, as it were, the additional value of a brief university term.

[1] See page 210.

An unfortunate incident in the general revival of cheerful interest in all kinds of subjects was that ecclesiastical controversies also revived. Dr Benson was now Archbishop of Canterbury, and he allowed himself to be induced to cite the Bishop of Lincoln, Dr King, before him for ritualistic practices. No one had much belief in this restoration of a form of procedure, the validity of which was more than doubtful, and the enforcing power *nil*. Dean Church described the precedents as "fishy." The "Lincoln Judgment" which issued from the case remained, failing appeal to a tribunal which had enforcing power, an expression of opinion from which each side was free to extract what it liked and neglect the rest. But the proceedings served to irritate a number of old sores; and, as it happened at the time that the new and very elaborate reredos in St Paul's Cathedral had been attacked as papistical, another centre was provided for disagreement. How radically general public opinion had altered since the old days of ritualistic prosecutions may be seen in the tendency to be more interested in æsthetic than in doctrinal criticism of the reredos. The change may also be seen under another aspect in the report of a joint committee of both Houses of the Convocation of Canterbury, which recommended the establishment of brotherhoods of celibate clergy as the most useful way of supplementing the work of the Church in large towns.[1]

The elections to the first county councils took place in the spring, and, although the social stirrings of the previous year had given some indication of the new spirit, no one was prepared for the astonishing energy aroused by the elections to the London County Council. It may in some lights be seen as pathetic that London should thus confess its backwardness in municipal development, should be genuinely excited by the prospect of activities which were

[1] One brotherhood, called the Order of St Paul, was founded, but came to a premature end.

an old story in every other large centre of population; Manchester and Glasgow men might have smiled as a grown man smiles at a child. But at least, when the elections were over, London had such a council as probably had never been gathered for municipal work anywhere in the world. Some of the most capable members of the House of Lords were on it—Lord Hobhouse, Lord Rosebery, Lord Monkswell; Radical scions of great houses, like Mr George Russell and Mr Richard Grosvenor; philanthropists like Mr Quintin Hogg; some of the most notable economists, such as Sir Thomas Farrer, Sir Reginald Welby, and Sir John Lubbock; men of letters like Mr Frederic Harrison; City magnates, barristers and, above all, a very powerful force of working men, among them John Burns, who had shown in fighting his election at Battersea that his recent exploits in London streets were not those of a mere ranter, but those of a man whose power with workmen was almost what he chose to make it. Altogether the elections blew a blast of new air into every corner of London. The doctrine that the working man had little to expect from the ceaseless strife of party in Parliament was hasty; but it did far more good than harm in turning the minds of the labouring men to the possibilities of the London County Council. "Practicable Socialism" was the motto with which Burns entered the council. The novel which we have already mentioned as having borne a great share in the foundation of the People's Palace, Walter Besant's *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, gives us the real key to the enthusiasm with which the first London County Council was elected. One of the characters in that book is pleading with a club of working men to turn from barren political theories: "Has any Government," he cries, "ever done anything for you? Has it raised your wages? Has it shortened your hours? Has it protected you against rogues and adulterators? . . . Listen. You want clean streets and

houses in which decent folk can live. The Government has appointed sanitary officers. Yet look about you. Put your heads into the courts of Whitechapel—what has the sanitary officer done? You want strong and well-built houses. There are Government inspectors. Yet look at the lath and plaster houses that a child could kick over. You want honest food. All that you eat and drink is adulterated. How does the Government help you there? . . . You want your own Local Government. What every little town has you have not." [1] Seven years later London had its Local Government, and rose to the occasion as keenly as the most ardent reformer could desire. There is no more important landmark for the social historian of the last thirty years than that election. The point is not that there was a large majority on the more democratic side—the Progressives, as they were ultimately called—but that the keenness displayed is a measure of the quantity of thought and activity which was at this time deliberately diverted from parliamentary politics, because of the opinion that better work could be done elsewhere. The deliberateness must be borne in mind, because when that activity returned at last into political channels it was in some quarters mistaken for a new force.

Another event of the early months of 1889 which sprang from the introspections of 1888 was the foundation of the Christian Social Union. Its aim was to take full account of the changes which were occurring in the social system, the immense nexus which was replacing the old relations of employer and employed, of salesman and purchaser, and to awaken a new kind of responsibility. In a word, it asked afresh the question, Who is my neighbour?—and suggested that only the widest possible answer could now satisfy a Christian.

The parliamentary session of 1889 was chiefly interesting for the triumph of the party which had been agitating the

[1] *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, chapter xxviii.

question of our naval defences. The naval estimates provided for a new construction programme of the enormous size of twenty-one and a half millions, ten of which were to be drawn from the Consolidated Fund over a period of seven years, the remaining eleven and a half to fall on the estimates over a period of five years. Ten new battleships were to be laid down under this programme, the truth being that one of the great changes in ideas of naval construction was taking place. The introduction of armour-plating had, quite naturally, turned the minds of naval constructors rather to the defensive side of ship-building; armour was to protect the ship from destruction. It now occurred to the authorities—or perhaps especially to Mr White, the Chief Constructor—that the offensive duties of a fleet had fallen too much into the background; and these ten battleships were to inculcate the new doctrine of offensive power. The voice which might most honestly have been raised against this great expenditure was stilled. On 27th March John Bright died, after a long illness. He must for years have felt himself but little in accord with political developments; and the support his name gave to the Unionist Coalition must have been as sad to him as his own inability to remain in the Government which bombarded Alexandria. It was by an impulse little short of inspiration that *The Times* applied as his epitaph the words written by Matthew Arnold of Byron:

> "He taught us little, but our soul
> Had felt him like the thunder's roll."

Beyond naval affairs the session had only minor interests. The long-talked-of Department of Agriculture was at length set up, with Mr Chaplin as its first President. The Scottish Local Government Act, extending the establishment of County Government to Scotland, was found to be more remarkable than had at first sight

appeared, since it gave permission to apply part of the Exchequer grant to the county authority for the payment of school fees, and so established the principle of free education. Mention must also be made of the Cruelty to Children Act, passed this year, since it extended the protection given under the old Act so as to include the exposure of children for begging purposes in the streets, and also added an improvement by permitting the issue of a search warrant by a magistrate on sworn information, instead of leaving the duty of prosecution to Poor Law Guardians only. There was some hope that Parliament might also face in this year the problem of the light gold coinage, by applying part of the Budget surplus to the calling-in of light gold coins at no loss to the holders of them, provided they were paid in before a certain time. It was fairly clear by now that if once the gold coinage could be restored to its value there was every prospect of such a supply from the Rand that for a very long time to come there would be bullion enough to maintain the value. Any man may see for himself to-day what the new supply meant. Out of every ten sovereigns that he receives in ordinary transactions he will probably not find one more than fifteen years old; it is quite possible that no one of any given ten would be more than eight or nine years old; and three or four of them would be only a year or two old. In 1889, when the Light Coinage Bill was introduced, it was quite a common thing for people to have sovereigns of more than one previous reign in their pockets—and the nearest previous reign was fifty-two years away. There had been such a shortage of bullion that new coinage had fallen hopelessly behind the demand. But the Bill was dropped. Even in 1889 the solution provided by the new supply of gold was of course less of a certainty than it afterwards became; and the bimetallists held their ground, while those who were against them felt it necessary to express, as that conservative financier, Mr

Gladstone, did at this time, a readiness to permit the issue of small banknotes. Meanwhile the Rand output rose until it reached a monthly average in this year of some 35,000 oz.; the white population of the Transvaal was about 100,000, but the Boers were said to be treating the new industry fairly, and no ominous sounds came from that part of the world. The relations between the two groups of the Ministerial Coalition were still uneasy. Mr Chamberlain was difficult for the Conservatives to absorb. He was advocating the production of some "substitute for Mr Gladstone's rejected Bill," [1] when the Government preferred to let the grass grow over the whole question of alternative measures for Ireland; his idea was the production of a large and final scheme of land purchase, by which the difficulties in the way of a generous grant of local government would be, he thought, much lessened. The Tories, on the other hand, were talking of abolishing the Viceroyalty, as the logical conclusion of the Act of Union, and were drawing careful distinctions between the state of things on the Clanricarde estate—the extreme case of an absentee landlord—and that on the Massereene estate, where the Plan of Campaign had, they said, been "worsted at close quarters," and boycotting had failed. A Cabinet Committee did indeed sit on the question of land purchase at the end of the year; the price of coalition had to be paid, and Mr Chamberlain possessed the means of enforcing payment. He returned during the year to his old occupation of constructing electoral machines. A Central Organising Committee for the Liberal Unionist party, on which representatives from all portions of the country were to sit, was formed in March. A Liberal Unionist van campaign over the country, with speech-makers, magic lanterns, and pamphlets, was opened in October; and a Government which had lost five seats at bye-elections could not afford to offend the master hand

[1] Letter to his constituents in Birmingham, 20th March 1889.

at campaigning. A quarrel between Mr Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill over the question whether the latter had, or had not, the first reversion of John Bright's seat in Birmingham showed that there was plenty of touchiness in the Coalition; and Lord Salisbury's speech to the conference of Conservative Organisations, in which he again offered to make way for another Premier, if that would advance the progress of the Coalition, was a significant confession. The quarrel mentioned was afterwards looked back upon as the beginning of the end of Lord Randolph's career; Mr Chamberlain had his way in the matter completely.

But all this was, to the general public, taking place comparatively behind the scenes. Its only interest in Ireland had more spectacular opportunities. The Parnell Commission suddenly turned dramatic at the beginning of the year. After weeks of evidence the judges came to the question of the letters alleged to have been written by Parnell, and demanded the production of the man who supplied them to *The Times*. The moment he appeared Irishmen were on the alert; he proved to be a broken-down journalist named Pigott, whom every Irish member knew as ready to do anything for money. To Englishmen the sensation came a few days later, when Sir Charles Russell, who was counsel for Parnell, made Pigott write certain words in the witness-box, confronted him with the same misspellings in the notorious letters as he now made in court, and thundered him into a total breakdown and a confession. He had forged the letters. He made a full confession next day, and fled to Madrid. Detectives followed him, and the news published on 2nd March that he had shot himself in a hotel there on the arrival of the detectives was, for the ordinary man, the end of the drama. The Parnell Commission might again relapse into the patient taking of evidence; it had at least provided a genuine excitement. However, there was another small

excitement of a different kind to come. A warrant was out for the arrest of Dr Tanner, an Irish member, on account of a speech he had delivered in Ireland. He had escaped the police for some time, and suddenly appeared in the House of Commons, when no one but his friends had for weeks known where he was. London enjoyed the comedy of his Jack-in-the-box appearance enormously, and when he left the House in the middle of a close bodyguard of members the group grew into a kind of hilarious procession to a neighbouring hotel. There Dr Tanner submitted to arrest; and the whole affair was too much of a joke for anyone but Radical members to labour the point that this kind of execution of an Irish warrant was a new piece of Mr Balfour's tyranny. It was to the Londoner a gay beginning to a season which brought him visits from General Boulanger, who flaunted himself as a Republican hero; the Shah of Persia, who got himself instantly into street songs; and Barnum's show.

The summer brought also one of those baffling criminal trials which have the power of absorbing the whole nation's attention. Early in August Mrs Maybrick was condemned on a charge of poisoning her husband, and it was said at once that "not one in three of the thousands who have followed the case expected a verdict of guilty."[1] Mr Maybrick was a man who had taken all sorts of drugs—eighteen different kinds within a single fortnight—and the doctors called during the case differed hopelessly as to the cause of death. A great popular agitation followed the verdict, and public meetings were held all over the country. The sentence of death was commuted, and very distinguished lawyers devoted themselves to the task of trying to secure Mrs Maybrick's release. The agitation was unsuccessful. The case must find a place in history because it focussed anew all the strong feeling in favour, first, of a reform of procedure which should allow prisoners to be put on

[1] *The Times*, 8th August 1889.

oath and give evidence, and, secondly, of the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal.

Thus in a full tide of interests the country swept on to a profound shock. On 14th August 2500 dock labourers at the East and West India Dock and South London Docks struck work. For a day or two no interest was taken in the matter. Then the large but orderly crowd at the West India Dock gates began to draw people's attention, and, as an uneasy temper manifested itself in other docks, the cause of the strike became known. The men, working at the most casual kind of casual labour, attending daily at the dock gates, getting perhaps an hour's work one day, and no work for three days, and then two or three hours again, had struck on a demand that hiring of labour should not be for less than four hours at a time, and that there should be a uniform rate of pay of sixpence an hour. A necessary corollary of these demands was that the "contract" system of work at the docks should be abandoned—that is to say, instead of letting out separately the job of loading or unloading this or that ship to a contractor, who then hired men as he needed them, the dock companies should themselves be responsible for the labour in their docks, and by not splitting up the various jobs should be able to hire men for a decent period, transferring them, as needed, to different ships. Dock labour was an extreme case of unregulated interaction of supply and demand. It was unskilled labour, crowds of men were always ready for it, and the dock companies had acted accordingly. By letting out the work on contract they made their money without any responsibility, and the contractor made his profit on the basis of the overwhelming supply of the labour he needed. The men's demands amounted to a minimum wage of two shillings a day for those who were lucky enough to be taken on. This implied no weekly minimum, because no man was sure of being taken on two days running, much less for

a week. It implied no general wage-earning standard, because no man could be sure of being taken on at all. There can be little wonder that a strike begun by men of such casual employment was not expected to last long.

On 17th August 2000 men marched from the docks to the offices of the West India Dock Committee in the City, and a deputation of them saw the chairman, Mr Norwood, a Member of Parliament, who told them that their demands should have attention, but that he could promise them nothing until they were in a different state of mind. He made the great mistake of miscalculating not only the possibility of organisation among the men, but also the change in public opinion about the operation of laws of supply and demand. The organisation began to show at once what had been happening in the past few years at those street meetings, which had from time to time broken the surface routine of London; men of the most casual type of workman had come to recognise certain leaders and to be accustomed to listen to them. In other parts of the country, where a single industry was dominant —on the coalfields, in the cotton towns in Lancashire, the engineering towns of the Tyne and the Wear and the Clyde—workmen had for years had their leaders. But in the great welter of London, where there were so many small industries that there was no common industrial feeling, there had been no opportunity for such concentration, until the lack of employment, due to a period of depressed trade, threw together in the streets workmen of all kinds; and men of force and capacity seized the chance to give a general basis to labour movements. The fact that this had been accomplished was of immense importance now when a specific case arose. John Burns instantly came back upon the East End scene, and found ready to work with him a dock labourer with an extraordinary hold on his fellows, Ben Tillett.

By 20th August the strike had extended to all the docks.

Pickets from Millwall, Victoria Docks, and Albert Docks reported that all the men there were out, and from Tilbury 1000 had come out. The dock companies had attempted to get the work done by coolies from the ships, but these men had refused to do it. More important still was the announcement which Burns was able to make to the men, that he had received virtual promises from other great ports—Liverpool, Glasgow, Grimsby and Hull—that the dock labourers there would support the London men by striking for an equivalent rise in wages, if ships were sent round from London to those ports for loading or unloading. Next day the dock directors placarded their docks with posters offering men twenty shillings a week to come in behind the strikers' backs. The average wage of a London dock labourer had rarely reached ten shillings a week. But the strike leaders were confident that "blacklegging" would be impossible on a large enough scale to break the strike. They picketed the docks; and then another procession went to the City, with 20,000 men in it this time, quiet, and giving no trouble to the police. Not the least remarkable fact about the whole affair is that already it was clear that the general feeling in the City was on the side of the men; the dock companies' attitude had been so careless an exploiting of the mass of unskilled labour that even the City man felt uncomfortable.

When another large procession marched up, on 22nd August, various business men brought pressure to bear on the dock directors, to induce them to meet the men's leaders again. On this occasion the directors said they would agree to a four-hours minimum engagement, when as much as four hours of the working day were left; but they would not give up the right to engage men at any hour they chose (which meant that the minimum wage would not always be earned), nor would they agree to the payment of sixpence an hour, except with the maintenance of the contract system. The interview therefore came to nothing.

The companies now tried importing labour from other places, and a number of men were hired from Liverpool. But the pickets successfully brought them out next day, and telegrams from the strike leaders stopped an attempt to get men from Southampton. Two shillings an hour was now being offered to "blacklegs," but the picketing was effective, and although a few men were smuggled into the docks, and kept there continuously, being fed and lodged in the sheds, the companies were baffled. Meanwhile the lightermen on the river, whose services might have been used to unload ships out in the stream and land the cargoes at wharves, had also come out on strike for better conditions. By 25th August, when a great meeting took place in Hyde Park, it was clear that public opinion was very largely with the men, the contract system having been one of the recognised forms of sweating condemned by the House of Lords Committee; the "docker's tanner" made its appearance in music-hall songs, always to a burst of applause; and a fund was set on foot—Dr Liddon taking a large share in the work—to provide food for the wives and children of the men on strike. More important still, the shipowners were against the dock companies, who charged shipping companies heavy prices for handling cargoes, and then proved themselves such inefficient middlemen that they lost the means of doing the work. The organisation of the strike now included a regular daily programme. There was always a huge meeting of men on Tower Hill, a procession to the City with collecting boxes, which never came back empty, and a meeting afterwards at the West India Dock gates. Money was shared out by the leaders in the evening. Before the end of August the streets around the docks had been emptied of almost all traffic; there was no work for waggons or carts to do. The Corn Exchange and the Coal Exchange were practically idle, the wool salerooms and the Mincing Lane rooms were idle too. On 26th August a new element

came into the struggle, Mr Sydney Buxton, Member of Parliament for Poplar, the dockers' division, joining in the interviews between the dock directors and the strike leaders.

On 28th August the directors said that, if the sixpence an hour was not insisted upon, they might meet the other demands; but the men kept firmly to that minimum. If the directors had believed in the men's power of continuing the fight, they might by this time perhaps have taken warning from the sound of the cheers which greeted Burns and Tillett as they left the dock offices after that interview. The two leaders had come this time without the customary procession; the cheers were from sober City men in the street, who had happened to recognise them as they left the dock offices. Mr Buxton now suggested that the shipowners might deal with the men directly, engaging the labour to handle their own cargoes, and Sir Thomas Sutherland, chairman of the Peninsular & Oriental line, was ready to take up the suggestion, if the dock companies would stand aside altogether. But some shipowners, chiefly men in a small way of business, did not care for this solution.

September opened with a new interposition of negotiators. Cardinal Manning, whose father and brother had been chairmen of dock companies, had been to see the Lord Mayor, and to suggest an attempt at intervention. The two of them went to interview Mr Norwood, and spoke to him plainly of "the isolated and untenable position of the dock companies"; Mr Norwood now argued that it was impossible in the existing state of the dock finances to accede to the men's demands. It may be noted that a sidelight on this view of the question can be gained from the angry comment of the shipowners, to the effect that the "stupid rivalries" of the dock companies had caused them to overweight themselves with capital. For a day or two after the intervention of the Cardinal

and the Lord Mayor public opinion was in suspense, and the proceedings of the strikers were more critically watched The issue of a manifesto by Burns and Cunninghame Graham, threatening a "general strike," was condemned as a rather hectoring proceeding; and the work of the strikers' pickets was so jealously scrutinised that accusations of incitement to violence began to be made. Then the dock directors foolishly threw opinion against them once more by refusing to recognise Burns and Tillett at all in the negotiations, which had now narrowed themselves down to the single question of the extra penny an hour.

On 6th September a new move was made. A conference was called at the Mansion House, consisting of the Lord Mayor, Cardinal Manning, the Bishop of London, Mr Sydney Buxton, John Burns and Tillett. There seemed to be a possible line of negotiation in a resumption of work at fivepence an hour, on condition that within a certain period the rate should rise to sixpence an hour. Burns and Tillett refrained from pressing for recognition by the dock directors, and the Lord Mayor, the Cardinal, and Mr Buxton conducted interviews with the directors. This led to an unfortunate hitch. By some misunderstanding the three negotiators thought that, if the sixpence an hour were granted on 1st January, the men would accept those terms, and they succeeded in making the dock directors agree to this. But as the extra penny was not, in this agreement, applied also to overtime payment, the men refused to accept so long a delay, and the terms were rejected at a mass meeting. The negotiators, who had believed that they could on their part offer the definite adherence of the men, were offended, and it seemed likely that public sympathy would be alienated. Probably one thing that prevented such a change of opinion was the unswerving energy which the leaders of the strike were devoting to the suppression of tendencies to violence. Burns, interposing his sturdy shoulders and fists between

strikers and blacklegs whenever a fight seemed imminent, deserved all the credit he got for riding the storm. Moreover the sharing-out of relief had been admirably organised; the pickets were on the whole showing excellent discipline; and the strike was altogether being conducted with no little dignity.

On 13th September, when it had lasted four weeks, settlement at last began to appear within sight. The conference of negotiators had begun again on 9th September, and Cardinal Manning and Mr Buxton were in communication with the dock directors. The announcement that the lightermen were willing to return to work, pending arbitration in their case, was the first real relief; and it was accompanied by a rumour that the dock negotiations were proceeding on the basis of the payment of sixpence an hour beginning on 1st November. On Saturday, 15th September, the dock settlement was signed on those lines. The men had won practically all their demands, and a huge triumphant meeting was held in Hyde Park. The dock directors undertook not to discriminate against strikers, and the strikers not to discriminate against blacklegs. The latter undertaking had behind it, as everyone knew, the strength of the fact that the strike had organised at last some of the most casual labour in the country. The Dock, Wharf, and Riverside Labourers Union had grown out of it, and under one of the most prominent of the strike lieutenants, Tom Mann, it grew rapidly into a body formidable enough to be sure that the ground gained would not be lost. Within a month many of those who had been blacklegs in the strike were members of the union. The dock directors held a peevish meeting, complaining of the attitude during the strike of the clergy and the big shipowners, and even of the public. The Strike Committee published their accounts, duly audited,[1] and showed the world that, out of £46,499 re-

[1] *The Times*, 4th December 1889.

ceived in subscriptions (£4000 had come in one sum from Australia, and large sums from Germany and France) there was only a sum of £192, 11s. for which the auditors could not account. This minute failure was due to a natural difficulty in keeping accounts at the beginning of the strike. That it was so minute, in an average distribution of over £11,000 a week to a great number of men not at the time bound together in a regular organisation, is an astonishing tribute, alike to the leaders who carried it out, and to the men's acceptance of their leaders' control.

London had at last seen organised labour at war; and, because things that happen in London have the newspapers at their service, the whole country had seen it too, in a way in which it had never yet seen a strike. This may partly account for the friendliness of the London public to the strikers; London is always ready to be carelessly genial towards something that is fresh. In one sense indeed the strike did inaugurate a new chapter. The trade unions all over the kingdom had supported men as yet unorganised, and that unrest in London, which had appeared to casual observers so vague and so easily to be distinguished from the recognised—even, by contrast, respectable—labour movements, had coalesced with Trade Unionism. For the most unskilled and casual labour the laws of supply and demand were no longer to be in control of the market. The dock strike had done effectively for men what the Committee on Sweating was trying to do for women; and political economy as the elder generation understood it had been dethroned. The organised strength of the workmen, with public opinion acting to some extent as the "governor" on the engine, had introduced the new element of regulation. As long as strikes were confined to skilled trades the change was not so apparent, for, after all, the willingness of the skilled men was a vital feature of the supply; it could not be regarded as such in an unskilled labour market.

Barely had the dock strike been settled when another serious one occurred in London, at the South Metropolitan Gas Works. Then came a regular crop of strikes: the workers at the Silvertown Rubber Works came out, and so did bakers, omnibus men and tramcar men. The engineers at the Maxim-Nordenfeldt Works followed, and the employees in the gas department of the Manchester Corporation. Philosophical observers noted two distinct forms of strike among those going on in the last portion of the year. One form—that, for instance, of the strikes of bakers, omnibus men and tramcar men—was for the lightening of a heavy load of work; the other—that of the gas employees and the engineers—arose from the men's claim to a voice in the control of the work, on such points as the abolition of overtime and the regulation of piecework. The latter came to be called the "New Trade Unionism," and people, who had never had enough bitter things to say of the old straightforward strikes for more wages, began now to think of them as almost praiseworthy in contrast with the new kind of strike. The South Metropolitan Gas Strike was rendered notable by the policy which the directors adopted; they offered to apply the co-operative principle to the work, the men to participate in the profits on a sliding scale, receiving 1 per cent. on their wages for every penny by which the price fell below two and eightpence per thousand cubic feet.[1] The Union objected to this arrangement, as likely to weaken the men's allegiance to the Union, and the dispute went on. It lasted until well into the new year, and then in February 1890 ended in the complete surrender of the men, who accepted the profit-sharing principle, and returned to the hours in force before the strike. The serious outbreak of strikes caused considerable discussion of the possibility of setting

[1] The price of gas in London is regulated by an Act of Parliament, under which a fall of price accompanies every advance of a certain magnitude in profits.

up conciliation boards. They had been working well for twenty years in the north of England,[1] and the London Chamber of Commerce appointed a committee to consider the introduction of the principle as part of the chamber's work. A Blue Book on strikes, published in November, showed that, out of 509 strikes in 1888, 332 had been settled by arbitration.

One or two other interests at the end of the year diverted the public mind from industrial experiences. Late in October a meeting was held at St James's Hall to urge the Government to action in the matter of rabies among dogs. In 1870 eight counties had been affected by it; in 1889 thirty-three were affected, and the number of deaths from hydrophobia had amounted in thirty-eight years to 939. There was a movement for founding a Pasteur Institute in London for the treatment of cases; but the desire for prophylactic treatment was kept subordinate to a demand for a general muzzling order to be enforced for twelve months. Even Pasteur himself was strong on the point that by such regulations hydrophobia could be entirely stamped out. Moreover prophylaxis by inoculation was at the moment somewhat on its trial in England. There has always been a strong opposition to the vaccination laws, and so many people had been going to prison rather than conform to them that the Government had this year to set up a Royal Commission on the subject.

In November Stanley and Emin Pasha were at last approaching civilisation, and in December they reached Zanzibar. Emin had been ill, but his health was improving, and it seemed likely that his long years in the Soudan, his extreme danger, and the anxieties he must have suffered when the fall of Khartoum left him utterly alone, would not lastingly have injured him. Stanley was returning, not only with the rescued man, but with new geographical

[1] See a letter by Dr Spence Watson in *The Times*, 5th October 1889.

knowledge as to the extent of the great Victoria Nyanza. There was, however, reservation in the enthusiasm over the news of the arrival in Zanzibar. The affair of Major Barttelot and the rearguard of the expedition was still awaiting elucidation.

In the closing days of the year Robert Browning died in Venice. A well-known and well-liked figure in London society, he was in advance of his day in his refusal to play the poet, and his taste for passing among his fellow-men as one of themselves. Yet those with whom he had least association—the over-earnest and the over-intense—had done most to foster admiration of his work.

CHAPTER XII

1890: A YEAR WITH A STORMY ENDING

TEN years of the new social spirit, of the revolt against political economy, may not have achieved much for the poorest and most oppressed forms of labour. Sweating, the knowledge of which had gone to the hearts of decent people, remained almost undiminished, though here and there workgirls had combined. Yet those who could see further than their own pet remedies (and pet remedies abounded to a degree that makes the innocence of the eighties almost as remarkable as their warm heart) had cause to rejoice. Labour had not grown tidier in its habits, more elevated in its amusements, more thoughtful in its leisure. On the contrary it was betting and drinking rather faster than before. But it was far on the road to being able to bargain for its wages; and, slow though the visible differences may have been, it was none the less a vast change that has put the great majority of labouring men in the position formerly occupied by the most skilled and most intelligent alone. Moreover even among the intelligent and the well-organised workmen there was new force of will. One of the strikes of the early part of 1890 was a coal-mining strike in the Midland district. It lasted only four days, the men obtaining their demands; but it aroused its share of comment. "Twenty or even ten years ago," said *The Times*,[1] "it would have been out of the question for 300,000 workmen to combine so perfectly as to stop work at one given moment and to resume it at another." The importance

[1] 21st March 1890.

of a big strike having occurred in London is nowhere better seen than in the greatly enlarged interest which was now taken in all labour disputes. Much of it ceased to be a sympathetic interest. The world, pursuing its custom of making distinctions satisfactory to itself, was careful to separate sweating and bad housing conditions from the general labour movement; it thought it could hold up its hands at the latter while devising remedies for the former. But at least it was more aware of the general movement than it had ever been, and the summer brought it sufficient reason to hold up its hands.

Financially the year opened with the "cold fit" which not unnaturally followed the company-promoting booms of the past year or two. After three years of its new existence Allsopp's brewery was in difficulties, and a shareholders' committee was appointed in February; the committee decided that there had been no misrepresentation in the prospectus, but a large body of shareholders adhered to their opinion that the goodwill had been greatly over-estimated. In any case the policy followed in the flotation, of placing all the ordinary and preference stock on the market, had thrown a heavy burden on the profit-making, which owing to increased agency charges from the severity of competition had failed to respond to the need. But apart from the rights and wrongs of the case, the mere fact of the discontent of shareholders was enough to cool the speculative mood. One of the principal business activities of the year was the advance in the amalgamation of the banking companies. The Capital and Counties, the Birmingham and Midland, the Union, and Prescott Dimsdale's carried out several absorptions in 1890; Williams Deacon's combined with the Manchester and Salford Bank; and Lloyd's Bank, which had taken up several local banks in Worcestershire and Warwickshire in 1889, was growing into a widespread business. The reasons for these amalgamations were, no doubt, sound

enough. The shortage of gold made the maintenance of a number of separate bank reserves increasingly difficult, while the advance of wealth depending more and more upon paper exchanges made the burden of disjointed responsibilities much heavier. Moreover one bank depended so much upon the solvency of another that the separate stability of each had almost ceased to exist, and large amalgamations hardly altered the reality of the situation. At the same time they undoubtedly lessened the elasticity of local trade. Personal character ceased to be valid security for loans and overdrafts when the old local bankers, with their individual knowledge of all their clients, were replaced by distant directors whose lack of such knowledge compelled them to confine their loan business within hard and fast rules. Many a merchant and tradesman, who could once have pulled through a difficult time by the help of a banker who knew his rectitude, fails under the present system, which demands more formal securities. Meanwhile, the gold difficulty brought about a vigorous revival of bimetallism, and of discussion of the true relation between money and gold and prices. The Rand continued to enlarge its output, reaching in this year 43,000 oz. a month. But the Treasury proposals to deal with the coinage still hung fire, and made no appearance in Parliament this year.

The London County Council, if late in the field of municipal enterprise, distinguished itself in its very first year of existence by a policy new in conception. This became famous in private Bill controversy a little later as "the betterment principle." The principle, for which opportunity was given by the necessity confronting the council of making up the deficiencies of the Metropolitan Board of Works in the sphere of street improvements, was that enhancements of the value of premises, such as might accrue from better frontages, better means of approach, and better surroundings, should go by rights not to the

owner, who had done nothing to bring about the new conditions, but to the public body, which had done all. The principle was an old one in America, but there the enhancement of value was paid down by the owner in a lump sum; the London County Council proposed to make it a tax on the premises. The idea was at once assailed, the Duke of Argyll being its most prominent critic; and it appeared that not the least drawback to the scheme was going to be its distortion of the English tongue. "Betterment" was bad enough; but the duke did worse when he wrote that the tax was illogical and unjust because the "goodment" of a house in a small street was no more due to the owner or occupier than the "betterment" of a house in a big new street. Other critics followed with a further atrocity of language, arguing that if "betterment" applied to some houses, "worsement" might be claimed against a municipal authority by the owners of premises unfavourably affected by the diversion of traffic to new streets, or by tradesmen compelled to move elsewhere. The opponents of the scheme as a whole treated the affair as one of the property market; the council's experts, notably Sir Thomas Farrer, took the higher and less disputable line that a public authority had a right of taxation, and, as street improvements cost money, taxation should fall to a special extent on those benefited by the expenditure. An attempt, however, to introduce the principle in the Strand Improvement Bill, promoted by the council this year for pulling down Holywell Street and opening up the "bottle-neck" of the Strand at that point, failed; the clause was thrown out by the House of Commons Committee, chiefly owing to the objectors' arguments that the council made no estimate of the amount of "betterment," and that the definition of the principle and the limitations of its application were arbitrary.

Before the session opened, one of the heroes of the

Irish conflict had passed from the scene. On 19th January J. G. Biggar, the inventor of obstruction, died. On 22nd April 1875 he had first baffled the House of Commons, holding back an important debate by the simple process of reading enormous extracts from volumes bearing more or less remotely on the subject, and adding brief comments of his own. Later on he invented the more subtle method of endlessly moving the Chairman out of the Chair in Committee. His name stood for fifteen years of constant fear of parliamentary paralysis.

Hardly had the House met in February when the Report of the Parnell Commission was published.[1] Lord Morley has given us a vivid picture of the members during a dull debate all poring over the Blue Book just put into their hands [2]; but, hard as both sides tried, with cheap

[1] The chief findings of the commission were, briefly :

(*a*) That the Invincibles were not a branch of the Land League, nor organised nor paid by the League ; nor did any of the Irish party associate with known Invincibles. The Pigott letters were all forgeries. Parnell and the rest of the party had no knowledge beforehand of the Phœnix Park murders and were not insincere in condemning them.

(*b*) That there was no ground for the charge made by *The Times* that the leaders of the Land League based their scheme on a system of assassination, or, even in the case of the most dangerous language, intended to procure murder ; though such language did cause an excitable peasantry to carry out the Land League's laws even by assassination.

(*c*) That the Land League leaders never denounced boycotting and intimidation, and never took any steps to assist the police in detecting crime.

(*d*) That there was ground for suspicion that Land League funds were used to compensate persons injured in the commission of crime.

(*e*) That the Irish Party funds had received large sums of money from the Irish National League of America, which was controlled by the Clan-na-Gael, the dynamiters' organisation.

[2] *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 408.

annotated editions of the report, to whip up feeling on the subject, it cannot be said that outside the political world anyone cared very much for detailed decisions of the commission as to whether Parnell and his followers had in this, that, or the other way sanctioned or been encouraged by violence and the party of violence. The ordinary man's interest was only aroused when, in the debate on the report, a month later, Lord Randolph Churchill electrified everybody by roundly attacking the Conservative Government. He was at this time rather erratic in his political appearances, and the remonstrance which his constituents at Paddington addressed to him shows no little anxiety.

Parnell himself was hardly ever seen during the session. Since his illness in 1886 he had grown more and more mysterious, and the piles of letters and telegrams awaiting him from time to time at the House of Commons were a strange spectacle. In his absence—and in the uneasiness which his absence caused to those who knew the circumstances—the Irish party were faced with the necessity of making up their minds about what looked like a large instalment of Mr Chamberlain's alternative to Home Rule. Mr Balfour introduced in March an Irish Land Purchase Bill, setting up a scheme of voluntary transfer of ownership from landlord to tenant, purchase money being advanced to the latter from a Government loan at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., the total amount being limited to thirty-three millions. At the same time Mr Balfour proposed to set up a Congested Districts Board, with power to create small holdings, and to promote migration within Ireland or emigration from it.

Fortunately for the practically leaderless Irish members the two proposals were not pressed forward at the time. The House was engaged on other matters—notably the Tithe Rent Charge Bill, which removed the duty of paying tithes from the occupier of land to the owner, and the

Employers' Liability Bill; amending Bills on this subject were, it was said, becoming a "hardy annual," but the need for this one was shown by the fact that on an average 62 per cent. of the workmen's claims under existing Acts failed on some technical point. The present Bill made the great step of placing the liability entirely on the employer, removing sub-contractors out of the case. The work of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor was finally met this year by a Housing of the Working Classes Act, which for twenty years was to govern the activity of public authorities in this direction.

The final report of that commission had been a fairly drastic document. In the sphere of administration it recommended that a statutory duty should be laid upon local authorities of enforcing the powers they possessed in the matter of insanitary dwellings; that medical officers of health should reside within, or within a mile of, their districts, and give their whole time to their work; that the staffs of sanitary inspectors should be increased, and should consist of men acquainted with the principles of building construction; that for London the Home Secretary should appoint special inspectors to report at once; and that any vestries and district boards which had not made by-laws should be obliged to do so immediately. Secondly, the report recommended the consolidation and amendment of existing Health and Housing Acts. Thirdly, in the direction of new proposals, it recommended that local authorities should have greater facilities for the erection of workmen's dwellings, and compulsory powers for purchase of land for dwellings; that vacant sites should be rated at 4 per cent. of their selling value; that compensation for land acquired under Housing Acts should be reduced to market value and no more; that there should be a system of cheap Government loans for municipal housing schemes; that railway companies destroying houses in extending their lines should be obliged to provide

accommodation for the number of persons so displaced, and to provide it concurrently with the destruction of the original houses; and that cheap transit to outlying districts should be facilitated, the Government initiating provision of cheap trains. There were also some recommendations as to easier methods of securing damages against owners of property by those who had suffered from the owners' neglect in sanitary matters; as to small holdings; and as to Mr Chamberlain's new doctrine of loans to enable workmen to become owners of their houses.

The report was too sweeping to be embodied all at once in legislation, but the Act of this year was quite energetic. The first part re-enacted and consolidated earlier Acts, and the second part created new powers of buying up insanitary areas, demolishing unfit dwellings and obstructive dwellings (so as to permit the opening of closed courts and culs-de-sac), and of erecting new houses on those sites. Power was given in this part of the Act to deal with smaller areas than those for which powers were given by the Artisans' Dwellings Act.

Two Acts dealing with infectious diseases should also be mentioned. That of 1889 empowered local authorities to make by-laws for the notification of infectious diseases by the head of the family concerned and by the doctor attending the case. That of 1890 gave powers for stopping the sale of milk from dairies notified as infectious, and for undertaking the disinfection of houses. To some Conservatives all this social legislation seemed excessive, and again the Liberal Unionist influence was blamed. Even those who were not of this mind felt that Parliament was overloading itself. Its real difficulty, however, lay in none of these things, but in a second attempt to create a policy of extinguishing public-house licences with payment of compensation. Mr Goschen in the Budget proposed to allot a sum raised by extra duties on beer and spirits to the local authorities. The ground was prepared by

a return of licensed houses, showing that the proportion of them to population ranged in county districts from 2·2 per thousand inhabitants, in Cornwall, Middlesex, Northumberland, Surrey and the West Riding, to 7·9 per thousand in Cambridgeshire; and in boroughs from 1·6 per thousand in Jarrow to 7·6 per thousand in Canterbury and 10 per thousand in St Pancras. The statistics had many curious features, but the whole subject was fought out again on the broad question of whether a licence was really and actually an annual thing, or included a genuine presumptive value.

It happened that at the moment a suit was in progress which brought the question to the proof of law—the famous case of Sharp *v.* Wakefield. It was a case in which the renewal of a licence had been refused point-blank by licensing authorities on the evidence of the police, and the licence-holder based a claim for compensation on the argument that, though a licence was nominally only given for a year, it carried implicitly the expectation of renewal, since without that no one would spend money on a public-house, or have any interest in maintaining it decently. The brewers (who were of course behind the case) had made a tactical mistake. They had chosen to fight on the claim of a public-house remote from any ordinary population that might need it, far from police supervision, and suspected of being a haunt of poachers and bad characters. Consequently when the Court of Appeal upheld the magistrates' decision—as in the end the House of Lords also upheld it—the party which refused to recognise any right to compensation had been given a handsome weapon. Mr Gladstone pronounced that the annual power of non-renewal was "the one healthy spot in our licensing law"; and the Liberal Unionist wing of the Ministerial party refused to admit the compensation principle except subject to a ten years' time-limit, after which the absolute power of non-renewal should hold

good.[1] The net result was that the Government dropped the whole proposal; but, as the extra tax on liquor was established, the money had to be used. It was therefore attached to technical education. In the latter subject the year was not without importance. The Act of 1889 had proved to be obscure on certain points, and a conference between local authorities and the education authorities was held to clear up doubts. It had the great result of establishing the right of local authorities to grant scholarships, which infinitely increased the value of the Act. An Act securing this point, and also definitely including manual instruction under the terms of the earlier Act, was passed in 1891. It is not without interest to note that the London School Board caused an outcry in 1890 by providing pianos for its schoolgirls.

With the summer came the sequel to the dock strike of 1889—a stirring among wage-earners. Profit-sharing schemes succeeded to conciliation board projects as the most widely discussed methods of meeting the new unrest, but the workmen, as they had already shown in the South Metropolitan Gas Strike, were extremely suspicious of any weakening of their attachment to their unions. The Labour Electoral Association, which had been founded a year or two earlier, was beginning to receive the adherence of the large trade unions, and this political tendency puzzled the kindly people who had been telling the workman that Parliament was useless to him. The association opened a special fund to support candidatures of labouring men for Parliament; and the idea of paying salaries to members of Parliament, which was brought forward from time to time during these years, received additional argument. Dismissal of the idea took usually the grimly brief form that few young men of parts and ambition would be tempted

[1] See a statement by Mr W. H. Smith in *The Times*, 24th June 1890.

by £400 a year, and no working men were worth it. As May day approached, it looked as if the old struggle with the police might revive; the socialist bodies arranged a demonstration, which the police prohibited; but the affair proved in the end too small to fight over. Two books just at this period were the means of conveying socialist visions to the public outside the socialist ranks. Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, a presentation of the *phalanstère* system in its logical completeness, was published in 1889; and William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, a charming fiction of an England without capitalists or landlords, pervaded with the golden afternoon light of the wide meadows of the Upper Thames, where he had made his home, was published in 1890. But neither book had any relation to the working activities of the moment. John Burns was extraordinarily energetic, addressing meetings of workmen almost every day, and enlarging the number of trade unions; while Ben Tillett, his colleague of the year before, was upholding the need for keeping all the unions national in scope, so that in any given case not the local men alone would have to be dealt with. Women workers were also on the way to vigorous combination. Certain associations of ladies in various towns for the care of friendless girls had been developing under pressure of the growing concern for working women into local unions of women workers. In 1890 the Birmingham Union held a conference at which papers on various subjects connected with the industries of women and girls were read. It was an important conference, because it led to a succession of others, from which in the end the National Union of Women Workers arose. In one of the hardest of women's trades, that of chain-making, there was an endeavour to set up a trade union. Unfortunately the Sweating Committee was ending in disappointment. On the Conservative as well as the Liberal side there was some indignation when it was announced in

the summer of 1889 that the committee was postponing its report; and when, early in 1890, Lord Dunraven discharged himself from the chairmanship, because his draft report had been unanimously rejected, there was little hope of light or help from the inquiry. The report was a cautious document, which made no proposals for legislation. The state of public feeling, however, prevented the disappearance of the subject, now that it had been effectively raised.

At the Trade Union Congress of the year Burns triumphed in the mingling of the new men with the old in the labour movement, the new men being wholly and solely working men; and in the fact that in 1889 forty-five new unions had been established, and seventy-two more in the nine months of 1890. The total income of trade unions in 1890 was very nearly a million pounds. The gospel of the Eight Hours' Day largely occupied the congress; and even prominent politicians like Mr Courtney and Mr Morley—nay, Mr Gladstone himself—had to weigh very seriously their opposition to it.

Strikes were frequent. Boot and shoe makers, brick makers, railway porters and quay labourers, Liverpool dock labourers and bargemen were all out in April; and ironworkers and colliers in South Wales during the summer. Such manifestations aroused much more than purely local anxiety. But at the height of that anxiety, relief was given by an event which could only be taken as vastly diverting—the police struck! They demanded in June more wages and allowances, and although a month later their strike had collapsed to an affair concerning some forty men, the story had roused such hilarious excitement that Life Guards had to be called up to disperse the mob which hung about Bow Street. Less amusing, but equally shocking to the official mind, was a strike of postmen which followed. In this the principle of Union labour in a Government department was at stake, and the

authorities only won a temporary victory, after great inconvenience to the public, by the dismissal of 400 men. Though probably without relation to labour troubles, an outbreak of insubordination in the Grenadier Guards added to the respectable citizen's indignation at the general spirit of revolt; the matter was at any rate serious enough to cause the second battalion of the regiment to be ordered to Bermuda as a punishment. It must be added that the new Trade Unionism showed that it had no small control of its men in the case of a strike at some of the London docks in September, concerned with the unloading of grain ships. Tom Mann and the Dockers' Union ordered the men back to work, and they went. It is interesting to find the British Association at its meeting this year diagnosing the social condition very shrewdly; in a discussion on "Some Typical Economic Fallacies of Social Reform" its members gave the first signs of knowledge that the humaneness which had usurped the place of political economy was not the force of the future; and there was an astonishing tendency to accept the doctrine that the problem of socialism was only one of degree, and not of kind. One of the greatest of the older political economists, Professor Thorold Rogers, was just at the end of his life; he died on 13th October.

At one moment in the summer foreign policy laid hold of the public mind in such a way as it rarely does in England during peaceful times. In June an agreement between Great Britain and Germany was published, by which, in return for recognition of our status in various parts of Africa, we ceded Heligoland. The cession was violently criticised, and there was a momentary recrudescence of Jingoism. The young Kaiser was not popular in England, as his father had been. He was regarded as over-ambitious, impatient, self-willed; and his acquiescence in Bismarck's retirement from the Imperial Chancellorship this year was thought to have been rather too ready. The British public,

crediting the Kaiser with self-assertion and dreams of German expansion, was in no mood for cessions of territory. However, Lord Salisbury's reputation survived the momentary outburst. Our profit from the German agreement was the establishment of our interest in Zanzibar, Somaliland, and Uganda. When the Anglo-Portuguese agreement followed, later in the year, it was remarked that Africa was now "pretty well parcelled out." It was not quite. Trouble was brewing in the Transvaal, where some Europeans at Johannesburg in March pulled down the flag of the Republic, and three arrests were made for high treason. A reminder that the filling up of the map of Africa did not necessarily mean the end of adventure was afforded by the life-story of Sir Richard Burton, who died in October. Whatever might happen to the map, Arabs remained on the earth, and a man who could live with them, as Burton had lived, need never want for romance. Virile, emphatic, impatient, uncontrolled, Burton was one of the most picturesque figures of his day. Outside Arab life and literature his great interest was swordsmanship; and he was the first to stand out in England against the over-elaboration of style in fencing.

Among the domestic interests of the year the most remarkable was a wave of self-consciousness in regard to British art. The æsthetes had themselves to blame, but they must have shuddered when they saw the newly aroused sensibility of England expressing itself as a John Bull kind of appreciativeness. In one art this new sort of Jingoism did not advance very far. The announcement in 1890 that Sir Arthur Sullivan was engaged in the composition of grand opera on the subject of *Ivanhoe* marked one of the least happy moments of British art. But British painting was a different affair, and it had recently followed a trend genuinely national. There was therefore much enthusiasm behind the proposal to found a National Gallery of British Art; the movement first

acquired force in March and April 1890; and in June Mr Henry Tate, a millionaire sugar merchant, offered his collection of modern British pictures, fifty-one in number, as the nucleus for the Gallery. But he had stipulations to make. He maintained that the authorities of the National Gallery were not to be trusted with a new collection of pictures, since they kept buried out of sight in the basement of the Gallery a large number of paintings, especially the Turner water-colours, which ought to be in the public view. He would therefore only offer his pictures on the understanding that satisfactory arrangements should be made for keeping them on exhibition. This was bound to mean a new building; and the whole project was for the time held back by negotiations between the Government and Mr Tate.

The Church of England mourned in 1890 the loss of Dr Liddon, who died in September. His preaching in St Paul's was one of the most powerful instruments in that restoration of the cathedral to a living agency in the life of London, which had been proceeding under Dean Church. But, great as his preaching had been, his influence upon young men at Oxford and in London was greater. A little earlier the Roman Catholics in England had lost Cardinal Newman, who died in August. He had always been rather a great convert than a great Roman Catholic. The story of his spiritual struggle was so intimately the story of many souls of his time, whether the goal reached had been the same for them or not, that he became a figure almost of legend. For the greater part of his life he failed to find favour at the Vatican for any of his plans or his ideas for extending the Roman Catholic influence in England. Manning appeared to suspect him of Liberalising tendencies of thought. But late in his life a change came at the Vatican, and from Leo XIII. Newman received the cardinal's hat; Manning, who had received his from Pius IX., may have felt that Newman's was easily earned.

The national concern, which had expressed itself so largely in 1889, about the increase of betting, showed no diminution. It was augmented by the very natural readiness to point an obvious moral, from the fact that, while on the one hand the workmen were fighting for more wages and more control of their lives, they were at the same time spending more money on gambling, and more of their hours in a barren form of excitement. The real secret of the spread of betting on horse races was rightly discerned to be the originating of the "Starting Price" idea. It was impossible for bookmakers not on the course itself, and therefore unaware of the run of the betting at the last moment, to make a profitable business of betting until there was some fixed form of the odds to be laid. The invention of a starting price provided this. The chief sporting papers arranged that their reporters at races should establish, just before each race started, the most commonly offered odds in the ring, and these were telegraphed to London as the starting prices of the horses named. Then all that the backer had to do was to pay his money to the bookmaker, the understanding being that he took these odds. The publication of the odds by the evening papers completed the setting up of a regular racing system for those who need never go near a race. Nor was this the only form of popular gambling. Prize competitions in newspapers, which had already attracted the attention of the police, were enormously enlarged by the violent rivalry of two penny weekly papers just at this time. The proprietors, or their advisers, made the ingenious discovery that all the advantages of a lottery—namely, the temptation of an enormous prize, drawing so many small sums that handsome profit would still be left—could be gained by a penny publication with this extra advantage, that the sale of tickets was the sale of the paper. A prize of several hundred pounds, a freehold house and garden, even of "£1 a week for life," sounded magnificent;

but hundreds of thousands of sixpences would cover the cost several times over. A bald lottery being illegal, prizes were offered for some competition easy enough to make hundreds of thousands of persons enter for it. But as the early efforts of this kind were so easy that the selection of a winner had to depend upon pure chance, the authorities had ground for action under the Lottery Acts, and the papers concerned took alarm. Not, however, before the main popular demand for amusement had been attracted into this new channel. Outdoor pursuits took one or two new turns. In 1890 golf had become so popular that for the first time it seemed to challenge the supremacy of lawn tennis; golf clubs rather than tennis racquets were the smart thing to carry on a Saturday afternoon. "Safety" bicycles too were making their way fast. They had been invented in Coventry in 1885, but had not at first displaced the high machine. Now they were beginning to be seen everywhere. In regard to more passing interests of the ordinary man it may be mentioned that the famous forty days' fast of Succi was successfully completed this year, and drew crowds to the Westminster Aquarium, where Succi sat in a glass-sided room, melancholy and nervous-looking, and smoked cigarettes. An old craze of the early eighties was revived by Dr Nansen's plans for reaching the North Pole; he proposed to give up the earlier plan of establishing the ship in winter quarters somewhere out of the ice-pack, and to shorten the sledge-marching, by having the ship built with a V-shaped hull, so that she could be taken right into the ice-pack, and would, when the pack closed, be merely lifted up and wedged, instead of being crushed. A glance at other scientific interests shows us that the telephone was by now so greatly improved that lines were opened this year from London to Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester. The frozen meat trade, too, had issued finally from its probation; the New Zealand traffic, which in 1882 had

amounted to £19,000 in value, touched in 1890 a million sterling. Nor was the meat market the only gainer. Whereas there had formerly been no direct service of steamers to New Zealand, there were in 1890 ten mail steamers and twenty-two cargo steamers all on the New Zealand service, and all buying coal and stores there as well as their cargoes.

The year is also memorable in science as having seen the publication of Dr Koch's theory of tuberculosis and its remedy; in the closing months of the year a most vigorous discussion of it took place in the British medical profession. The clinical use of hypnotism attracted some attention; experiments at the Salpetrière Hospital in Paris were being watched carefully.

The year had a strange and wild ending. Early in November the contests of employers and workmen threatened to rise into a savage war in the shipping trade. Everyone was expecting at this time a labour war on a great scale—railways, mines or shipping seemed most likely to provide the battlefield; and shipping gave the first menace. The establishment of unions had spread to it, and under J. H. Wilson the Seamen's and Firemen's Union had been set up. Inevitably there had followed an objection on the part of union men to working with non-union men; the microcosm of a ship could not but intensify differences. The shipowners not only expressed their feelings with more violence than most employers, asserting that they would "lay up" all British shipping at need, but also immediately formed a combination of their own, the Shipping Federation. For the time being neither side fired the first shot; but a dock strike at Southampton, issuing in disorder and riotousness, which had been markedly absent from the London strike, kept uneasiness very much alive.

Then the affair of the Stanley expedition to relieve Emin broke out into that bitter controversy which had long

been vaguely in the air. Stanley had come to England in the summer, and gave public lectures to crowded audiences. For a time he was the lion of the season. Then his popularity cooled a little on the discovery that he did not at all take the ordinary Briton's view of Germany's ambitions. Emin Pasha, after having been rescued, had actually entered the German service; and Stanley not only failed to see any fault in this, but even revealed a wish to behold German enterprise at work in different parts of Africa. People remembered that the fate of his rearguard still called for explanation. In November he made the first move himself by attacking his critics; he accused Major Barttelot and his companion, Mr Jameson, of having resorted to cannibalism and cruelty to the natives round their camp. His critics replied by a plain charge against him of carelessness and gross mismanagement, amounting to sheer abandonment of his rearguard, in order to push on to the personal glory of relieving Emin.

Stanley had published an account of his journey under the title of *In Darkest Africa*. At the time when the quarrel arose England was being stirred by a book which, cleverly taking a cue from this title, was called *In Darkest England*. It was written by General Booth, the head of the Salvation Army, and was an extreme presentation of that misery of poverty and sweating in great towns which had had so many presentations of late years. Booth's plea was that the Salvation Army was able to reach lower strata than any other organisation had attempted to reach; and he wrote the book as an appeal to the country to provide him with so large a sum of money that his Army could set on foot what amounted to permanent relief works, refuges, night shelters, and a whole network of institutions. He threw over all economic considerations, to a degree which even the most ardent reformer had as yet shrunk from; his relief work had already been accused of doing more harm than good by undercutting the

market. His present challenge was instantly taken up; prominent people pointed out his ignorance of the work that was already being done, his failure to guarantee adequate administration of the funds he asked for, and the danger of diverting to one object, and that largely untried, the money which at present was flowing in many useful channels. His statistics were disputed too. But before the year closed his fund had reached £90,000.

The scheme was unfortunately launched. It had small chance of public attention against the two shattering events of November 1890. When men opened their newspapers on the 14th all the mysteriousness of Parnell's recent life, all the hints and suggestions which had gathered round his first refusal to bring *The Times* to trial, fused to a thunderclap in the report of the divorce case of O'Shea *v.* O'Shea and Parnell. The case was undefended. Parliament, as it happened, had met again this month, and by a stroke of Fate Irish business was the work before the House. The Irish Land Purchase Bill, postponed from the summer, and the Irish Relief Bill, setting up the Congested Districts Board, were resumed. The Irish party was not in the House to discuss them; it was sitting upstairs, in Committee Room 15, which those days rendered famous, with Parnell in the chair presiding, sometimes cynically, sometimes tyrannously, over discussions of his retention of the leadership. His constant absences from London had led to a confusion at the beginning of these sittings. Mr Gladstone, acting on the unmistakable sense of the Liberal party organisations, had intimated that, while Parnell remained leader, he could not himself lead a party whose chief work, as long as he led it, would be Home Rule; therefore either Parnell must resign, or he must. This intimation could not be conveyed to Parnell immediately; it was the moment of one of his disappearances. It could hardly be conveyed first to anyone but him; and so it fell out that the Irish party met, and expressed confidence

in him as leader, before Mr Gladstone's attitude was known. The party had met far too hastily, and their resolution was rather an expression of their feelings towards British reception of the disastrous news than a considered decision. No party largely Roman Catholic, and representing a country preponderantly Roman Catholic, could have remained under a Protestant leader in such circumstances. But the resolution delivered them into Parnell's hands. He fought his ground in a way which was the final revelation of his contempt for public opinion in England. He refused sympathetic and influential advice to retire for the moment, and trust to the storm blowing over. He drove his party into such a position that, in order to avoid the ultimate reproof to him, the majority, forty-four in number, at last walked out of the committee-room. Then he dashed over to Ireland, suppressed an issue of *United Ireland* which would have been fatal to his position, and made speeches in Dublin as if he were still leader. He fairly took his opponents' breath away. Parliament only sat for a fortnight, and in that time the two Irish Bills were passed. The effect of the O'Shea case on the demeanour of the House was extraordinary. All spirit seemed to have gone from it, and it was spoken of as "The Long-faced Parliament." The affair was such a complete disaster, and was ending in such a desperate struggle, that the men not immediately concerned felt it like a cloud upon them.

In consequence Parliament had perhaps too little attention to spare for the other shattering event. On 15th November financial London was shaken to its foundations by the news that the great banking firm of Barings had come to grief, its difficulty being attributed to imprudent commitments for public loans and private enterprises in Argentina and Uruguay. The one hopeful element in the situation, to which tottering credit clung, was that the announcement of the disaster was not made until it could

be accompanied by intimations that the Bank of England had the firm's affairs in hand, with a guarantee of twelve millions to meet the liabilities. Everyone trusted that this meant that in the last resort the Treasury would be behind the bank. As a matter of fact it was not. Mr Goschen had been summoned to town by the governor of the bank directly the danger became known, but he had seen no course to pursue except to throw the responsibility of meeting the crisis entirely on the City. He could not run the risk of pledging the Treasury to a guarantee, and then perhaps having to defend in Parliament the use of public money in support of a private firm. Yet he was much distressed, and some of the visits he paid to financiers in the City did not encourage him; he found most of them near panic. But the governor of the Bank of England rose to the occasion, and gathered sober men around him. He borrowed a million and a half in gold from Russia, Rothschilds' secured the assistance of the Bank of France to the extent of three millions, and the bankers and merchants of London guaranteed seven millions. Thus the Bank of England was able, when the announcement of Barings' situation had to be made, to convey reassurances. The firm's liabilities were about twenty millions, and the whole object at stake was to give time for the realisation of assets without such a panic as would have depreciated them beyond remedy. This the guarantee fund did. Immediate liquidation was staved off, and the firm was quietly reconstructed as a limited liability company, and registered on 21st November. Consols dropped to 93, but that was a small penalty to pay. If the shock had added to the storminess of events, it had at least been prevented from ending the year in chaos.

CHAPTER XIII

1891: THE ISOLATION OF TRADE UNIONS

ONE of the most baffling difficulties of the Home Rule question was that, while on the one hand it provided an ideal capable of calling out all that was high-minded and devoted in the Liberal forces, it was at the same time so entirely a question by itself, and so detachable from all normal social advance in Great Britain, that a party committed to it was not thereby committed to anything else. More—Mr Gladstone was an old man, and the enormous plan for Irish self-government had not been constructed until he was old. The result was that he frankly remained in leadership for that single purpose only, so that the Liberal party stood committed to a policy which not merely did not include, but positively precluded, other activities. The downfall of Parnell, disturbing as it was, did not affect the Liberal party's position altogether adversely. No harm was ever done to an ideal by events which force its supporters to uphold its righteousness beyond and above all personal failings. It was of little concern in the end that opponents of Home Rule should now be saying that the O'Shea divorce case amounted morally to a reversing of the Parnell Commission's Report. But that Parnell should have refused the Liberal party's tactical decisions, that Home Rule should no longer be the united demand of a homogeneous force in Parliament, but a bone of contention between two groups, who were capturing and recapturing one another's newspapers, one another's platforms, one another's seats in Parliament—all this was of serious concern. The cause was further

weakened by statements which Parnell was making, to the effect that he and his party had never really liked the Home Rule Bill of 1886, and only accepted it on Mr Gladstone's threat of resignation. The Unionists were able to gain much ground by pointing out what a serious difference it made if the Irish party had not genuinely accepted the Bill of 1886, and the Liberal party were not really in accord with their supposed allies. From the Liberal point of view the worst of these recriminations was that, since Mr Gladstone remained where he had been for Home Rule, and Home Rule alone, these wrangles demanded the best brains of the Liberal party to overrule them. This in turn meant that the party was not taking its share in other affairs, and had too little attention for social reform. Trade Unionism was left to fight its battles alone. Whether, if circumstances had been other than they were, the development of the labour movement would have been different—whether any politicians would have been ready at this time to see that the purely social consideration of wages and labour conditions was now as impossible as the old purely economic consideration, and that the problem was becoming political—must remain an open question. At any rate one example on each side in politics can be quoted as showing a perception of the new conditions. Mr Courtney, speaking in February of this year, remarked upon the change in labour aspirations from an inclination towards isolated socialistic experiments to a conviction that the goal must be reached by legislation. Lord Dunraven, a little later, was expressing himself in favour of a State Department of Industry.

That industrial conditions formed a very large and insistent question was admitted in the establishment in 1891 of a Royal Commission on Labour Problems. Wage disputes were for the moment in the background. Trade union leaders believed in the power of organised labour to mend many flaws in the industrial system, which employers

had so far failed to cure. Unemployment and irregularity of employment came, they thought, largely from the fact that labour was almost as helpless as raw material; a master could pour both alike into his factory at high speed in a time of demand, and leave both alike outside when the demand was slack. Fully organised labour, on the other hand, could secure that an employer's prudence for his own profits should necessarily imply prudence also for his employees' wages and conditions. Consequently, practically all the labour struggles of this time were rather on questions either of working conditions or of the recognition of unions than on questions of wages. There were not a few of such struggles. In January the miners in the Silksworth Colliery struck on a demand that the "deputies" should be union men. The managers refused to have union men in that position, and for two months the fight went on. It was complicated by the decision of the managers to evict men on strike from cottages owned by the colliery, a course which caused a sympathetic strike to spread in pits which had taken no part in the original dispute. The settlement reached in March was that while the men would not insist on the "deputies" being union men, the managers would not forbid them to be. A railway strike in Scotland, affecting the Glasgow & South Western Railway, the North British Railway, and the Caledonian Railway turned on complaints of overwork and heavy overtime exactions. It failed, because although the business community agreed that the men were overworked they would give no support to the strike. The companies held out against receiving any representatives of the men's union as such, and against entering on any negotiations before the men returned to work. At Cardiff the Seamen's and Firemen's Union struck against the issue by the shipping firms of a "ticket" which insisted on union men not refusing to work with non-union men. This also failed, partly because the dockers, stevedores,

and coal-porters were not in alliance with the seamen and firemen. In London tailors struck on three points—better workshops, a uniform "time-log" (the existing system of payment being a complicated one) and the abolition of partnership in a piece of work; the masters conceded the first and third points, reserving the second for consideration, and the men returned to work after a ten days' strike distinguished by the elaboration of its picketing. In June there was an omnibus strike in London, and again the picketing was good—hardly a 'bus was on the streets for a week. Overwork was the chief complaint, and the men won a seventy-hours week, a minimum wage of six-and-sixpence a day for drivers and five shillings a day for conductors, the right to a day off in the week at their own charges, and an understanding that if the companies' dividends rose there would be an advance in wages. An interesting effort of the year, apart from strikes, was the attempt made by the Dockers' Union, which was also a General Labourers' Union, to bring into its ranks the agricultural labourer. The idea was that a pooling of interests might lead to an improvement of conditions in the country—an increase of allotments, as well as advances in wages—and that this, in turn, would react on the dockers' conditions, by diminishing the flocking of rural labour to the towns, where it became for the most part casual labour at the dock gates.

It was no wonder that Trade Unionism of this nature roused fresh opposition. It was denounced as an attempt to set up a new monopoly, and the special point of attack was the policy adopted by Trade Unionists of intimating to employers their intention not to work with non-union men. This was described as "intimidation," and was actually held to be so in a county court judgment delivered this year, but overridden by a decision of the Queen's Bench in July. Other opponents argued that the attempt to set up a monopoly would have a bad effect on prices;

that, for instance, higher wages in trades which were absolutely necessary to the public, such as shipping, docks, railways and collieries, would only mean that less money would be spent in other directions in which there was no compulsion for the public to spend, so that wages in the cotton and other such industries would decrease. A more curious criticism was that, if men by successful development of their unions forced their wages up, women's wages would suffer, because, being outside unions, they would get no work unless they consented to take a poor wage. On the whole the first feeling in the labour world when it became known that the Government contemplated setting up a Royal Commission was one of anxiety; it seemed probable that the object of the commission, whether acknowledged or not, would be a restriction of the rights of combination. The commission was appointed in April. It was said at the time that the Prince of Wales, who had been deeply interested in all the sidelights on life in great towns which the Housing Commission had produced, would have liked to serve on this new commission, but had been persuaded that it would be unwise. The members of the commission were: Lord Hartington, Lord Derby, Sir M. Hicks Beach, Sir John Gorst, Mr Mundella, Mr Courtney, Sir H. Fowler, Mr Jesse Collings, Mr Gerald Balfour, Mr T. Burt and Mr W. Abraham, from the two Houses of Parliament; Mr Harland, of the Belfast shipbuilding firm, Mr Bolton of the Caledonian Railway, Sir F. Pollock, Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford, Professor Marshall, Professor of Political Economy at Cambridge, Sir W. Lewis, of the Cardiff Docks, Mr T. H. Ismay, of the White Star Line, Mr David Dale, an ironmaster, Mr G. Livesey, managing director of the South Metropolitan Gas Works, Mr Tunstall, a cotton employer, and Mr Hewlett, managing director of the Wigan Coal and Iron Company—for the masters of industry; and for the men, J. Mawdsley, of the Operative

Cotton Spinners, Tom Mann, of the Dockers' Union, E. Trow, of the Conciliation Board of the Iron and Steel Trades, H. Tait, of the Glasgow United Trades Council, S. Plimsoll, and M. Austin of the Irish Democratic Labour Federation. The reference to the commission was wide and simple; it was "to inquire into questions affecting the relations between employers and employed and the conditions of labour, which have been raised during the recent trade disputes in the United Kingdom, and to report whether legislation, and if so what, could be directed to good ends." The commission divided itself into three groups; Group A undertook inquiry into mining, iron-works, engineering, shipbuilding, and cognate industries. Group B undertook, roughly speaking, the transport industries; and Group C undertook the textile and chemical industries, and building, and other miscellaneous trades. In the last group two women "sub-commissioners" were appointed late in the year to investigate the conditions of women's labour. The work was enormous, and it was difficult for the commissioners, in the mass of detailed complaints and petty vexations brought before them, to keep any general view of their task. But some main lines of Trade Union policy were prominent enough to provide landmarks. At the Trade Union Congress, for example, which now represented over a million and a quarter workmen, the most prominent subjects were an eight-hours day, and an amendment of the law of conspiracy so that technical conspiracy should only be if directed to an object criminal in itself, and intimidation should only consist in actual threats of violence. The plea for limitation of work, in particular, provided a rallying-point for the evidence of employers before the commission.

One of the strongest proofs of a prevailing unconsciousness of the reality of the new forces at work is provided by the comments on the doings of the London County Council

When the first council came into existence the comments even of Conservative organs were wholly favourable. So incredible had it been thought that the new social movement, the new labour forces, should actually issue in any administrative act. Barely twelve months later the tone had changed completely, and by 1891 hardly anything was too bad to say of the council. It proposed to set up bands in the parks, and was stormed at for wasting money on pastimes for the poor; it proposed to purchase tramways, and to take over the London Fire Brigade, and was told that its career was a long succession of "absurdities which have humiliated London." Yet there was so little objection in principle to any of these proposals that the real offence of the council seemed to be that it proposed to do things for itself, instead of waiting to be given what the governing classes thought good for it. This was the worse offence, since these classes at the moment were in a liberal mood. The Conservative Ministry had set up County Government, they had passed a great Housing Act, and in 1891 they accomplished another of the tasks which the Liberal party had for years promised to undertake: they made elementary education free of charges. It was done by a simple process of adding ten shillings a year per pupil to the capitation grant. This sum was based on an average school fee of threepence per week. If any school charged more than that, it was at liberty to go on charging the difference. But in effect this was a Free Education Bill; and so the Liberal party's committal to Home Rule was made still more exclusive of other interests by the removal of another traditional item of its programme. The Bill was not such as a Liberal Government would have introduced; there would almost certainly have been some provision for increased public control over voluntary schools in a Liberal measure.[1] But in the discussion of the Bill the Opposition were content not to

[1] See *The Daily News*, 24th April 1891.

press that point. The Act came into operation in September of this year. Mr Goschen had a sufficient surplus in his Budget to provide at once the half-year's cost of the change, so that there was no need to delay its introduction. He had also enough money at last to press through the reform of the gold coinage which had been projected two years earlier. The Light Coinage Bill allotted a sum of £400,000 to the cost of withdrawing light gold coins at their face value. Parcels of gold coin of not less than £100 in value were to be received at the Bank of England without any light-weight deduction. It was decided that the average life of a sovereign before falling "below the remedy" was twenty years, and that of a half-sovereign about ten years; so that, if the South African gold supply proved to be as good as was said, the object of the Treasury would be in future not to allow gold coins to return from the bank into circulation after they had served for those periods.

The Factory Act of this year, though it had nothing to do with current labour movements, was an important piece of work. By setting up the local authorities as the inspecting power for sanitary purposes in connection with workshops, a position from which the appointment of factory inspectors in 1871 had deposed them, it created a dual supervision of industrial places, the inspectors being still charged with the supervision of hours of labour and age of employment; the inspector and the local authority were put into a situation in which there was bound to be a good deal of intercommunication, with a chance of excellent results.[1] Provision was made for the Home Secretary to have power to enforce the law, in the case of inaction on the part of a local authority; and workshops where adult men only were at work were brought under regulation. The Home Secretary was also given powers of certifying dangerous and unhealthy trades—a provision

[1] Cf. *The Factory System*, by R. W. Cooke-Taylor, p. 121.

which year after year proved more fruitful of good ; and an echo, somewhat feeble, but important, of the increased concern for sweated industries was to be found in the clause requiring every occupier of a workshop, and every contractor for work, to keep lists of their outworkers. The same kind of influence too may be seen in the provision that all piece-workers in textile factories should be supplied with information to enable them to understand their scale of payment. These regulations were, however, the work of the social conscience, and in the tradition of the last twenty years, rather than in the spirit of the coming time. That spirit may perhaps be detected in the restoration of important work to the local authorities, through which, as we have seen, the socialists hoped to operate most effectively. The new Act paid no attention to one popular demand : it appointed no women inspectors.

Parliament was prorogued at the beginning of August, which gave a comfortable sense that the national affairs were at last returning to a normal high-water mark. The London season had not been a very cheerful one. Influenza, which had hitherto been only a winter scourge, attacked London in May, and as a summer fever it caused nervousness. Dinner-parties failed, because people were really afraid of infection ; the after-effects of the disease seemed to be worse than they had been in previous years. In addition to this, the notorious " Baccarat scandal " had damped society's spirits, because when the name of a very great personage, almost the highest in the land and quite the highest in active social life, was brought into the case, there was an uneasy feeling that society had better tread gently for the moment. It was pretty generally known before the case came to trial that the Prince of Wales was concerned in it. Sir William Gordon Cumming brought an action for slander against Mr and Mrs Arthur Wilson of Tranby Croft, and against others members of a house-party there, for having said that he cheated at cards. The

Prince was called as a witness. He appeared in the box, the packed court gazed breathlessly, counsel in the case were appropriately submissive and respectful, and the law emerged from the ordeal of a wholly unprecedented event without a stain on its reputation for inimitable blandness. Outside the courts the results of the case were rather more lasting. Even those little inclined to notice such gossip as had long been current about the Prince of Wales felt the difference made by such a public revelation that "his 'set' was a baccarat 'set.'"[1]

Materially, as well as morally, the season was damped. Though the Baring disaster had been staved off, the effect of the strain was visible in a general contraction of financial activity. Flotations decreased; the Bankers' Clearing House returns fell 12¼ per cent. The Baring crisis had raised again in Mr Goschen's mind the question of the country's gold reserves; and he took up once more the suggestion of banknotes of small values. He let it be known that he was ready to consider authorising the Bank of England to issue twenty-five millions in one-pound notes against a reserve four-fifths in gold and one-fifth in Consols. But the hint was not favourably taken; and the banks pursued their own policy of entering into amalgamations; Parr's in 1891 became one of the prominent absorbing banks. In spite of the financial stringency the general purchasing power of the people remained good, as far as official figures showed. But there was no enterprise in amusements, no cheerful craze. When a new music hall in London, the Tivoli, was put up to auction, the reserve was not reached; however, as the bidding rose to £100,000 there must have been sufficient belief in the popular support for such places. In the autumn the gambling mania received an encouragement which must have seemed deplorable to those who were trying to wean the workman from betting. This was the year of the famous "man that broke the bank at

[1] *The Times*, 10th June 1891.

Monte Carlo," and he was hymned on every barrel organ. He was a Mr Wells, and he first rose to fame by winning £20,000 at roulette within a week. When his luck at that table stopped he turned to *trente et quarante*, and in a few stakes made £6400 more. He was playing for months, and his success gave rise to a great discussion of gambling " systems." In November his net winnings were said to be £30,000, and occasionally he " broke " a table in half-an-hour from the opening of play. His career relieved a somewhat dull year.

Hardly even in science is any notable event to be found. Electric light had made at last its final stride ; and it was said in 1891 that the number of incandescent lamps in London was greater than in any one of the five largest cities of America. One or two events of engineering history may be recorded. In August the last of the old broad-gauge lines of the Great Western Railway were taken up, and replaced by lines of the standard gauge. At the beginning of the year naval experts were greatly interested by a system of tubular boilers which Yarrow's had fitted in a torpedo boat built for the Argentine navy ; the firm had been for three years experimenting with them as a rapid means of getting up steam, and also, it was hoped, a safer method of keeping up the high pressures demanded ; but this Argentine boat was the first practical trial of the system. The Manchester Ship Canal was well advanced ; in June water was admitted to the section from Ellesmere Port to Eastham, and a second section, making a total of eleven miles, was open by the end of September. The first attempt to bring the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway—now the Great Central Railway—to London was also made, but the private Bill for the purpose was rejected by the Select Committee of the House of Commons.

We come this year for the first time in our period upon a really popular demand in fiction. The field since 1880 had

been held by writers more or less established, more or less conscientious artists—Meredith, Hardy and Henry James; Besant and Mrs Humphry Ward; Edna Lyall, Mrs Lynn Linton, Miss Braddon and Wilkie Collins. But when we read in a review of a new book by Mr Rudyard Kipling, *The Light that Failed*, a protest against "his apparent power—the affectation of barbarity," and the remark that "the public read him, so his dissatisfied critics must wait to be justified by an unborn generation," we recognise that here was a demand wholly beyond the normal guides of literary taste. It was a new impulse, a new British self-consciousness. The story told of battles of the Egyptian campaigns, and although the phrase had yet to be invented (by that same author) the idea of "the white man's burden" had been initiated. It had an impulsion of a practical kind this year in the first annual meeting in December of the British South Africa Company, which in a halo of romance was beginning its pioneer work north of the Transvaal. Mr Cecil Rhodes was already a figure of note in the London world, a figure lacking in social flexibility, positive, greatly given to argument, but wielding a large fortune, tireless, not afraid of the social sin of being a bore with his schemes of advancing British frontiers in the land of his adoption. He had by now made the British South Africa Company so important a body that the whole question of the position of chartered companies was being discussed. Some of those who most strongly approved of the existence of such companies thought that they should be set up by Act of Parliament rather than by Royal Charter, and should be compelled to keep their commercial and their administrative accounts separately. The informality of this method of governing uncivilised races was naturally popular with a generation which, through Mr Kipling's Indian stories, was learning to see itself as peculiarly gifted for the shouldering of responsibility in remote places of the earth.

Drama, as well as literature, has an important date in 1891. During the autumn Mr J. T. Grein set up the organisation which he called "The Independent Theatre." He asked for two hundred subscribers of £2, 10s. each, for the production of plays of serious interest, which, from lack of elements of popular appeal, were unlikely ever to appear in the English theatres of the time. The theatrical advertisements in newspapers of the eighties had been certainly barren reading. At the head of the profession Irving was playing chiefly Shakespeare, varying it with somewhat disastrous experiments in Tennyson's verse plays, and with frankly money-making productions of popular pieces, like Wills's *Charles I.*, or *The Bells*, or *The Corsican Brothers*. Other leading actors confined themselves to old-fashioned comedies, such as *Money* and *Caste*, to new melodramas, to farces, generally taken from French originals. The Bancrofts, Charles Wyndham, John Hare, William Terriss, Toole and Edward Terry rang their changes on a paltry list. Mr Grein's object was principally to produce plays by Ibsen, and the Independent Theatre did in fact first introduce those plays to British audiences. But the venture was regarded askance by most of the London world. To many, Ibsen stood for an unhealthy analysis of subjects better left unanalysed; to others he stood for a foreign impropriety, different from the old kind, but still not to be encouraged; to the advanced æsthetes he stood for a deplorable solemnity, very hampering to the gracefulness of life. But a sufficient appeal could be made to the middle-class culture, which somewhat heavily pursued the difficult life of appreciative enjoyment, and the Independent Theatre might perhaps have lasted longer if its efforts had not revealed the fact that the field of drama it affected was not a very wide one.

Educated taste at this time was much engrossed with "applied art." Furniture, wall-papers, hangings were all subjected to anxious, even over-anxious, canons of

beauty ; the great period of the " hand-made " was being ushered in with rather barbaric chairs and tables, and silver implements speckled with little hammer-marks. In 1891 William Morris added printing to his many accomplishments, and set up the Kelmscott Press, working with founts of type designed by himself, after a laborious study of early models of typography.

During the parliamentary recess the Liberal party made up its mind to overhaul its electoral banners. How dilapidated they were we have already seen. That the great leader should have devoted himself exclusively to one overmastering purpose would have been less serious if he had not been at the same time, by belonging to a much earlier generation, incapable of estimating new conditions in domestic politics. There is no evidence that Mr Gladstone in these years took any interest in the new forces and the new mind of labour. He had made Mr Broadhurst a member of his short-lived Government in 1886, but Mr Broadhurst was not, in the official view, a Labour representative ; he was only a Liberal with an unusual and interesting career. A Member of Parliament of a democratic turn, who was not a Liberal in name as well as outlook, would have had no meaning whatever for Mr Gladstone. But it might have been thought that this disability on Mr Gladstone's part was rendered less serious by his very frank and constantly repeated declaration that he had now only one object in political life. Did not this lay upon other important members of the party the duty of keeping the party in the forefront of advanced thought on social questions ? In their defence it must be said, first, that Mr Gladstone was apt to be masterful in regard to the formation of public opinion by his colleagues. Moreover, most of those colleagues went back to the days when schemes of social reform were usually coupled with the name of Mr Chamberlain, and regarded as impracticable Radicalism. Therefore when Mr Chamber-

lain took himself and his programme elsewhere no heat was left among the leaders in which new ideas might germinate.

Consequently, when the approach of the next General Election became imminent the party managers had to take that most futile step, the construction—not the selection—of a programme of legislation. County Government, Factory Legislation, Employers' Liability, and even Free Education had been taken away. What could be put in their place? One prominent item, indeed, of Mr Chamberlain's programme had not been even nibbled at by his new friends—Disestablishment of the Church. But Mr Gladstone would never lead a general assault on the Church he loved and magnified, and any wholesale measure of disestablishment must commit him at least to countenancing accusations against that Church. But he had shown in the case of the Irish Church that he could make distinctions. Statistics and local grievances could plausibly be used to make distinctions in the case of the Church of England in Wales, and perhaps also in that of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. The disestablishment of those two Churches therefore was a possible item in the programme. Next, a backward glance over the career of the Conservative Government discovered its weakest moment in the licensing proposals which it had tried to attach to the duties of the new Local Governments.[1] The decision in Sharp *v.* Wakefield had given the sanction of the highest legal tribunals to the opponents of those proposals. Here then was another possible party advantage. In a non-party way the legal decision had already had its effect. No less Conservative a person than Sir Michael Hicks Beach had announced at the licensing sessions in his part of the country—Fairford, in Gloucestershire—that the licensing magistrates would be ready to hear testimony as to any public-house which was felt to be unnecessary; in other words, that they were prepared to

[1] See pp. 230, 270.

enforce the purely annual existence of a licence, by refusing it on grounds other than those of misconduct. He also revealed a less direct result of recent controversies in an announcement that in future managers of "tied" houses, when asking for renewal of licences, must produce their agreements with brewers—a sign that public opinion was not at the moment friendly to the idea of licence-holders as the mere nominees of brewers. But stronger stuff was needed for a programme *in vacuo* than for processes of administration. The idea of Local Veto had already been made familiar by the apostles of total abstinence; it was now seen to combine the question of licensing with the new spirit of Local Government in a way that qualified it for a prominent place in party politics, and it became another element in the programme. Extension of the Local Government principle by district and parish councils with considerable powers for acquiring land for allotments, erecting cottages, and establishing small holdings; electoral reforms, including the abolition of plural voting, the payment of members, and State payment of returning officers' expenses; land reforms, with the abolition of primogeniture and entail, and the taxation of land values; and lastly, reform of the House of Lords—these miscellaneous proposals completed the party outfit.

Mr Gladstone was to speak at Newcastle on 2nd October. He accepted his conventional duty, and enunciated the *doctrinaire* list which had been evolved from the minds of party organisers. It fell flat. No one had any difficulty in deciding that Mr Gladstone cared about none of the speech, until he came to Home Rule.[1] The mass of Liberal agents saw the Church roused against them on Disestablishment, the brewers against them on Local Veto; and no real force roused for them. The Programme could only command the habitual and traditional

[1] In Morley's *Life of Gladstone* (iii. 462) the whole speech is dismissed with a dozen lines of distant reference.

Liberals, and such enthusiasm as might exist would be personal enthusiasm for Mr Gladstone. He after all was their beacon, and the programme only a disagreeable necessity. Home Rule was a reality; the other proposals were not. Nor was a minor factor in the speech, which was Mr Gladstone's own. He insisted on an early evacuation of Egypt. On the old lines of policy in regard to Egypt he was justified. Early in this year a battle fought by Sir Francis Grenfell at Tokar, in which Osman Digna was totally defeated, put the finishing touch to that restoration of confidence and security which had been decided upon as the governing consideration after the fall of Khartoum. Three battles had now had the result of establishing the frontier and relieving it from dervish pressure, and also of giving confidence to the Egyptian soldiers and making them into a real army. The battle before Suakin in 1888 has been mentioned.[1] In 1889 Grenfell defeated at Toski a threatening force under a warrior named Wad El Nejumi, who was believed by those qualified to know to be the really great soldier of the Mahdi's and the Khalifa's power.[2] The defeat of Osman Digna completed this stage of our work in Egypt; and Mr Gladstone therefore had some ground for reintroducing the question of evacuation. But of recent years temper in England had changed. The new sentiment for the British burden of responsibility was in the air; Mr Kipling was inflaming recollections of the Soudan campaigns; and Egypt under Baring and Grenfell was a satisfactory subject for national contemplation. Mr Gladstone had better have left it alone.

Even in that portion of his speech which dealt with Home Rule some observers thought that Mr Gladstone was troubled and embarrassed. He was indeed distressed by the spectacle of Parnell fighting, in a way he thought

[1] See p. 241.

[2] Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, ii. 64, 65.

mad, for control in Irish affairs. Bye-elections had occurred in Ireland, and Parnell had put up candidates against other Home Rule candidates; they had been beaten disastrously, but he would not give in. On his marriage with the lady who had been Mrs O'Shea the last powerful force in Ireland, which had not yet declared against him, *The Freeman's Journal*, submitted to the Roman Catholic view, and threw him over. He was to and fro between England and Ireland almost every week; each time his return showed him more haggard, more hoarse. Suddenly, a few days after the Newcastle speech, it was announced that he was lying desperately ill of pneumonia in his house at Brighton, having taken to his bed on his latest return from Ireland. The next day it was announced that he was dead. He was only in his forty-sixth year. The desperate strain and effort of the last twelve months of his life, the struggle, not against England directly, but against his late colleagues, seemed to the normal English mind to be aptly summed up by *The St James's Gazette*, in a quotation from the scene of Brian de Bois Guilbert's death in *Ivanhoe*: "Unscathed by the lance of his enemy, he had died a victim to his own contending passions." Some time afterwards, when the Irish party became once more united under one leader, the enduring work of Parnell could be perceived. He had roused Ireland to a single enthusiasm, which, though centred in himself while he yet led the party, was so burningly alive that it could centre finally in the party as a whole. His tactical work failed, because it depended too much on his own cast of mind; it was a balancing of policies which no one else could successfully imitate. But his conception of his work, his unwearying refusal to present the Home Rule case as other than a demand, built up a spirit in Ireland which neither fell with him nor died with him. Not by the party as he left it, any more than by the party as he found it, could he be judged; but by the crystalline compactness

with which for twenty years past the main Irish question has been kept free of all the legislation that was once supposed to be alternative to Home Rule.

On other benches too Parliament was to see gaps, when it met. On 6th October died Mr W. H. Smith, a more perfect type of the *bourgeois* than England has since produced. Methodical, capable, not without solid dignity, he left a stronger tradition behind him than his contemporaries expected. His upbringing made him less sensitive than his almost as solid predecessor, Stafford Northcote; but he also suffered less from the goading of Lord Randolph Churchill, who had in the later eighties begun to fall out of parliamentary life, and in this year left England for a hunting tour in South Africa. Another great figure passed out of the House of Commons upon the death, late in December, of the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Hartington succeeding to the title. Had he remained in the Commons he would have had to face the strongest pressure to identify himself finally with the Conservative party by taking the leadership there; as it was, he was able once more to move as deliberately as he always liked to move.

The lapse of a year since the inception of the Salvation Army scheme, known as the *Darkest England* scheme, provided an occasion for further criticism of it. It appeared that the year's expenditure of £17,000 had been taken from the capital sum subscribed; and the work had not been regulated on the basis of an income from the sum. General Booth had asked for much more, and was proceeding on the assumption that the larger sum was assured. He was considering a method of assisted emigration to South Africa, and here also was somewhat hampered by fairly direct intimations that the class of persons he proposed to send would not be welcomed in the Colonies, or in the British South Africa territories. His scheme, instead of being launched complete, had grown into little more than an enlargement of the Army's charit-

able work, which might or might not be prolonged, according as its power of appeal to the public was maintained. Meanwhile the Army was in the midst of some of the worst —and some of the last—of its street battles. It had been received with violent resentment in Eastbourne, a town which prided itself upon its manners and its social amenities. Every Sunday the Salvation Army fought with rowdies in the streets, and another kind of hostility confronted it in an attempt by the town authority to enforce a section of a local Improvement Act against street processions. The warfare raged undiminished through the winter.

London at the same time saw a revival of police action against socialist meetings. In Chelsea, Hoxton, Peckham, Southwark, Mile End, and Wanstead meetings of the Social Democratic Federation were broken up, and speakers were arrested. But this singling out of one form of meeting among the many that were held every Sunday had now no public opinion to back it. The winter was passing without any serious strikes, or grievous distress. But the insistence with which unemployment had been kept in the eye of London, and the new spirit of investigation of labour problems, had secured a patient and genuine interest for a great work which at this time was being published, Mr Charles Booth's *Life and Labour in London*. Mr Booth had himself been led on by his investigations into pauperism to propose, in a paper read before the Statistical Society in December, a system of Old Age Pensions of five shillings a week, which would not, in his opinion, be enough to discourage thrift, but enough to keep the deserving aged poor from the workhouse. It is characteristic of the Liberal paralysis of the time that, within twenty-four hours of that paper being read, Mr Chamberlain was adopting the subject as an urgent piece of domestic reform, and that no prominent Liberal seized upon it as a more vital appeal to the country than anything in the Newcastle Programme.

CHAPTER XIV

1892: A HALF-HEARTED ELECTION

THE year in which "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" overran the streets of our towns may well give pause to the observer of English habits. The tasteless and irrepressible air was at the time a universal annoyance; it appears now almost a portent. It was such an affront to English respectability as had never yet been administered, not only because it flaunted a vision of a high-kicking dancer on a music-hall stage, but because the very sound of the tune was jeering, as well as ludicrous. The sudden absurd jolt of its high note became a grin at the gait and carriage of a respectable man. Its penetrating shrillness warned people that nothing was going to be taken seriously. The street boy whistled it; the junior clerk sang it in suburban drawing-rooms; the gay dog went to see Lottie Collins dance it; even the cashier and the junior partner thought it. It was essentially different from any popular song which had from time to time ruled the pavement. The wildest of comic songs hitherto had been something said, which might appeal to you individually as funny, or be dismissed as nonsense. This one said nothing; it was a mere conspiracy against gravity of deportment, which every errand boy challenged you to join. It had no individual interest whatever; it was the voice of the crowd asserting itself. That overriding of the British self-consciousness of behaviour which had begun—and had been resented—in the Blue Ribbon Army and the Salvation Army, and had been forced forward by circumstances in the struggles of the unemployed, and the

more flamboyant side of socialist street meetings, now invaded the mass of the careless. Cheerful blatancy was as ready to parade the streets as profound conviction was; and the year of "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" contained the germ of the "Mafficker." The origin of the tune was gravely discussed in a law suit concerning copyright in it; it came from America, where it was said to have sprung either from lower-class negroes, or from disreputable haunts in St Louis. Certainly in its peculiarly idiotic quality of sound it has never been equalled.

To say that a street tune substantially modified the course of politics would be, in spite of Fletcher of Saltoun, to treat popular melody rather too gravely. Yet there certainly was at this time a tendency on the part of the plain average man, without much interest in politics or social reform, to make a little more of his own interests, and rather less of the labour revolt, the state of Ireland, the blessings of education, than he had been obliged to make in recent years. He advanced his own amusements with vigour. Golf attained in this year so much of a position in England that for the first time the Amateur Championship competition was held outside Scotland; it took place in May at Sandwich. The popularity of the game was felt to be "bewilderingly sudden."[1] Cycling had been receiving an immense impetus from the invention of the safety bicycle, which, besides being far handier, and easier to ride, than the old high bicycle, had rendered cycling practicable for women. In its evening hours half England was crazily intent upon "missing word" competitions; later in the year, when it was decided at Bow Street that these were lotteries, it appeared in the evidence that the coupons sent in by competitors ran into hundreds of thousands every week. The world of art was diverted by the publication of Whistler's *Gentle Art of Making Enemies*; but found some more serious interests in the

[1] *The Times*, 14th May 1892.

successful issue of the negotiations with Mr Tate for the foundation of the National Gallery of British Art, and in a considerable protest against the growing disfigurement of towns by sky signs, and of country districts by advertisement boards. In literature the publication of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* awoke a livelier interest in modern novelists; and the work of William Watson encouraged people to believe that the death of Browning and Tennyson would not leave the nation without a poet of the grand scale. Tennyson's death occurred in October of this year. Even the heavy ground of the drama was stirred; comedies by Oscar Wilde and J. M. Barrie blew over it a breath of wit and native high spirits such as England had not been known to possess. Finally, Paderewski's first appearances in London created a wild enthusiasm which, if at the time exaggerated, and often lacking in genuine appreciation, did nevertheless make music a subject of common interest, and prepared the way for a removal of the reproach that England as a nation cared nothing for it.

The year opened with sorrow. A form of influenza, apt to lead on to pneumonia, was again prevalent during the winter months; and on 14th January the Duke of Clarence, eldest son of the Prince of Wales, died from it. On the same day Cardinal Manning died. He had filled for a long time with tact, but with unflinching assertion, a difficult position in a society which could not admit the claim to princely rank, which he could not forgo. Every opportunity of position and power was to him a means of advancing the ends of his Church. His secession from the Church of England had been at the time more alarming than that of Newman, because he was a greater preacher and a greater administrator. His intervention in the dock strike of 1889 was part of an increased activity during his later years in the cause of reform at home. This activity has been attributed to the decline of his influence at Rome, which had, under Pius IX., been considerable;

with Leo XIII. he was less in sympathy.[1] The Free Churches also lost this year a very prominent figure by the death of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. His preaching at the great building in Newington, known as the Metropolitan Tabernacle, had for many years attracted enormous crowds to the place; and his sermons, being always reprinted in pamphlet form, probably reached a wider public than was in the compass of any other popular preacher. Homely, positive, charged with an amazing vigour of appeal and of denunciation, and delivered with marvellously effective control of the voice, these sermons were profoundly satisfying to Free Churchmen. They did not at this time look for such direct political quality in their preachers as the later fashion demanded.

The Church of England was involved in the final bout of controversy with the Agnostics on Biblical inspiration. From the staid pages of monthly reviews the battle had spread to the newspapers; and the Duke of Argyll, Mr Gladstone, and Professor Huxley were solemnly debating whether men should or should not believe in God, since the Book of Genesis shows no knowledge of the existence of kangaroos, and the story of Creation is demonstrably unsound in the matter of the greater saurians. This kind of controversy was doomed by the approach of a new spirit, which, if in many respects too light-hearted, was sane in its inclination to think that a Church stood or fell by other tests than those of reason, just as it had learned to feel that a social structure stood or fell by other tests than those of strictly logical principles.

One of the most striking instances of this spirit was provided now by the second election for the London County Council, which took place in March. All the criticism which the council's work had brought upon it from Conservatives, from irritable rich householders, from any who disliked and feared democratic administration, was con-

[1] See Mr G. W. E. Russell's *Collections and Recollections*, chap. iv.

centrated in a great attack during the early weeks of 1892. The strange result was that resentment of carping criticism was expressed not only by the advanced side of the council, but by the whole body of members. Even the leaders of the Moderate party complained of grumblings and growlings which were meant to " crab " the council, and might have the effect of frightening useful men from joining it. It was a Moderate member, too, who went so far in his admiration for the council as to say that it had in London so great and important a charge that it ought to have a permanent organisation, somewhat on the scale of Government departments. This was exactly the kind of large view of the council's duties which fussy ratepayers detested. At any rate, the attacks proved futile, and the new body elected this year had almost as large a Progressive majority as the original council had had. It made the first attempt to run trams along the Embankment, but failed to obtain powers from Parliament. Late in the year it accomplished an advanced piece of administration by setting up a works department of its own, and thus giving itself a strong hand against the contractors for public works. This was distinctly the most socialistic step that any municipal authority had yet taken, and was on quite a different plane from the provision of public services, such as gas and water, which in their day had made stir enough. Discussion of the water-supply, which from time to time was a pressing subject in London, when a dry summer revealed the inadequacy of the Water Companies' services, arose this year in a new form. The Birmingham Corporation promoted a Bill for powers to obtain a water-supply from certain mountain valleys in Wales, at a cost of six millions. The question whether London did not need that particular source of supply was raised. But it was not a matter on which there was as yet any commanding force of public opinion, and Birmingham secured the right to the valleys. The water-supply of all

large towns was becoming a more serious problem, not only from the perpetual increase of domestic demands, but from at least two other demands. One was the demand for public swimming baths and washhouses, and the other was the great extension of the use of lifts in big buildings. To take one example alone: in Birmingham the requirements of water for the latter purpose had amounted to 30,000 gallons daily, even in 1885, and by 1890 the amount had risen to 80,000 gallons. Another municipal interest of the year 1892 was the first instance of an electric tramway worked by a municipality.[1] At Blackpool the local authority took over the lines of tramway which had for some years been working on the conduit system. In this year Mrs Rylands, the widow of an immensely wealthy cotton-spinner, bought complete the famous Althorp Library, belonging to Lord Spencer, a library rich in every kind of treasure of book-collecting, and gave it to the citizens of Manchester.

Early in the year events began to be coloured by the prospect of a parliamentary election. The Government, having been in office for six years, had come to the customary time for a dissolution. The London County Council election was considered by the Liberal party organisers to be of good omen, and Liberal leaders talked County Council politics (Mr Gladstone even going so far as to suggest that the council might have control of the police), until the other side scoffed at them for "throwing Imperial questions into the background," though no one seemed very clear as to what Imperial questions there were at the moment. The advocacy of Old Age Pensions remained chiefly with the Conservatives, and was cautiously handled; Mr Chamberlain had persuaded both Lord Salisbury and Mr Balfour that it was not a matter to be neglected, and they wrote letters supporting the idea of a contributory scheme

[1] See *The Municipal Journal*, 2nd September 1910: article on the Jubilee of Trams.

of pensions, in which the State would have no concern beyond the setting-up of the machinery. Liberals were critical, both of this and of more general schemes of industrial insurance, which had been brought into the political atmosphere of the moment by the recent establishment of the German system of workmen's insurance. Allotments again provided matter for speech-making, and here, too, with the Act of 1887 to their credit, Government speakers took a high line. Mr Chamberlain asserted that 100,000 labourers now had allotments; and the Duke of Devonshire, going as usual to the root of the matter, even when the root was rather deep digging for a noble landlord, advised his party, besides making efforts to increase the effectiveness of the Allotments Act, not to neglect "those other and older objects of Liberal policy that were directed towards the freeing of the land from those encumbrances and difficulties under which our existing laws place it, as to inheritance and transfer." In the end this matter turned less to Conservative advantage than was expected; but in the preliminary rounds it was of more value to them than to Liberals. For a short time Woman Suffrage came to the front again. During the brief session before the dissolution Sir Albert Rollit introduced a Woman Suffrage Bill, and the question was discovered to have a new kind of vitality, when the platform at a meeting in St James's Hall in support of the Bill was stormed by a section who objected to the class limitations in the Bill. Hitherto Woman Suffrage measures had been so remote from practical politics that precise terms of enfranchisement had never been in dispute. The Bill was defeated in the House by 175 votes to 152. The most direct pronouncement on the position of labour from either great party came from Lord Randolph Churchill, who had returned to England in January. He upheld once more that form of democracy which consisted in trying to excise the middle class from the body politic.

In a letter to a candidate he remarked that political power had passed from the landlords and the landed interest to the capitalist and the manufacturer, who made laws to suit themselves; why, he asked, should not the Conservatives combine regulation of all conditions of labour by the State, under the guidance of the Labour vote, with "a foreign policy which sought to extend, by means of tariff reforms, over our colonies and even over other friendly states the area of profitable barter of produce?" But Lord Randolph Churchill had already ceased to be a real force in politics, and newspapers no longer made much of any suggestions from him. Besides, Labour had completed the turn of thought by which it had come back to faith in parliamentary work, and a determination to signalise in that, as well as in municipal affairs, the coming of the era of administration. Leaders on both sides had to take account of a new kind of Labour candidature. Mr Balfour took account of it, genuinely enough, by asserting that Liberals were always more interested in political reform than in social reform, and were therefore not the truest friends of labour. Mr Gladstone took account of it, not altogether happily, by deprecating independence of candidatures on the Labour side, as distinct from independence of action in Parliament; in other words he preferred a member nominally Liberal, whose votes might occasionally go against the party, to a candidate whose poll must inevitably weaken the Liberal poll in any constituency. But indeed, whatever had been said on either side, the Labour candidatures would have remained detached from both. Two or three times in the spring and early summer the power of trade unions shook the country. Early in March there was a strike of colliers, and although it only affected one-third of the coalfields it caused a panic at the thought of the possible laying-idle of factories and furnaces everywhere. Fortunately that strike was over in a fortnight, though it was followed by a more serious one

on the Durham coalfields, which lasted for twelve weeks. The two strikes were on wages conditions, the masters claiming the right, in view of the state of the market, to reduce wages by 13½ per cent. The men won a point in getting the reduction put at 10 per cent. In each case the working of the Union organisation was of a kind to make Labour little inclined to rely on any party but itself.

Amid all these political excursions Home Rule lost none of its party importance. Even in 1891 there had been lively discussion of whether Mr Gladstone should or should not be giving the country some details of the shape that Home Rule was then taking in his mind. One of the most prominent of the young men of his party, Mr Asquith, was pressing him on the point in public speeches. In 1892 all that was known was that the retention of a considerable number of Irish members at Westminster had been decided upon. The Conservatives, besides boasting of the effect of their five years of "resolute government" of Ireland, introduced this year an Irish Local Government Bill. But it was not very seriously intended; the elective nature of the bodies it set up was "bulwarked," as the ingenious phrase had it, in every possible way; and the Bill in the end was dropped. It had never been worth while for Liberals to give it serious opposition. Yet they went to the country in the end with their own policy to the last degree vague in such vital points as the control of the police and the judiciary and the treatment of the land question; and relied to no small extent upon attacking Mr Balfour's coercion, instead of explaining their own proposals.

Coercion, indeed, and the comparative failure of the Allotments Act proved in the end the two most pointed weapons for the use of Liberals. The employment of them, combined with a certain weakness in Conservative, as distinct from Liberal Unionist, electoral organisation, provided the Tories' excuse for their defeat. Parliament

was dissolved in June; and although the Government had been losing seats continually at bye-elections, probably no one on the Liberal side, except Mr Gladstone, had expected a complete Liberal victory. He expressed the most extravagant anticipations. In an article published in *The Nineteenth Century*[1] he tried to persuade the country to expect a Liberal majority of at least 100, and to be prepared even for the possibility of a Tory "landslide." Not only was he wrong, but his disillusionment took a peculiarly personal turn; his majority in Mid-Lothian, which had been over 3000 in 1885, and unassailed in 1886, fell to 690. In the country generally the only sign of opinion which could be called at all striking was the comparative failure of the Liberal Unionists. They had numbered 74 after the election of 1886; they numbered after the election of 1892 only 47; it seemed therefore that the attachment of the word "Liberal" to a position which did not include Home Rule was of no value as an appeal to electors; and to that extent Home Rule became a more firmly settled point of Liberal policy. The new House, which assembled in August, contained 274 Liberals, 81 Home Rulers (72 Anti-Parnellites and 9 Parnellites), 268 Conservatives and 47 Liberal Unionists. This gave a Home Rule majority of 40. It was not a strong majority, but it was remarkable, if the purely political circumstances alone be considered, that there should have been such a majority at all. The Conservative Government had passed a very considerable quantity of democratic legislation, and their record in that respect was far more satisfactory than that of the Liberal Government of 1880. One of their final pieces of work was a Shop Hours Act, prohibiting the employment of young persons under eighteen years of age for more than seventy-four hours in a week, including meal times. The Act required amendment later, as no provision was made in it for the

[1] September 1891.

expenses of administering it. But it was another instance of the kind of social legislation of these five years. Much of this, no doubt, was due to Mr Chamberlain's influence. But Lord Salisbury was quite as much alive to democratic demands as anyone of his time, for all the cynicism with which he occasionally presented them to his party. He was probably more alive to them than Mr Gladstone, who never successfully separated in his mind constitutional reforms and social advancement. Lord Salisbury had but little patience with the rights of man or the rights of citizenship; but he could see any given claim when it was presented to him apart from abstractions. Thus he had been able to move far in social reform since 1886. But he could not move in the spirit of the rights of democracy, and this spirit was what most distinguished, next to his own legislation, the past six years. Herein we may find some part of the reason for the defeat of the Conservatives. Much though they had done, they held themselves capable of either giving or withholding; and political Trade Unionism was bent upon breaking down that attitude. The fact that the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists failed to obtain against the Liberals alone a majority sufficient to counterbalance the Irish vote may be attributed firstly to the personal popularity of Mr Gladstone, and secondly to the new Trade Unionism. Incidentally new journalism had its share in the result. It is beyond doubt that *The Star* already wielded a formidable power; and in the spring of 1892 it was followed by the establishment of two halfpenny morning papers, *The Morning Herald* and *The Morning Leader*, the latter being published by the proprietors of *The Star*. These were the first halfpenny morning papers in the kingdom, and they came in time to help sway the election. The working man could not yet return many members of his own class to Parliament. His sense that Tories, even when they had passed Factory Acts and a Local Government Act and a

Free Education Act, were still Tories, could for the most part only express itself in voting for Liberals. This, with the persistent Liberalism of Scotland and Wales, just defeated the Unionists. Lord Salisbury did not immediately resign; he was not, until a vote was taken, in a minority. But the vote came speedily. Mr Asquith moved a motion of No Confidence on 8th August, and it was carried by 350 votes to 310. Then Lord Salisbury resigned, and Mr Gladstone formed his fourth Government. It included some new men, Mr Asquith becoming Home Secretary, Sir H. H. Fowler, President of the Local Government Board, and Mr James Bryce, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

There were new men in the House also. In some respects newness was perhaps unnecessarily self-conscious. The brass band which accompanied Mr Keir Hardie to Westminster when he took his seat gave some offence; his tweed cap hardly less. He was elected for South-West Ham; and if the band and the cap were intended to announce that a Labour member had arrived who did not call himself a Liberal, expected no favour from Liberals, and did not want the patronising kindliness which had been shown to previous members from the ranks of labouring men, they were not altogether out of place. Mr John Burns, too, was returned to Parliament, sitting for Battersea. These two stood for a change in the political spirit of labour, not unlike that which Parnell had made in the case of Ireland. The other Labour members had, like Isaac Butt, accepted the forms of the House, and parliamentary action to them meant all the old forms; they sat with the Liberals, and their hope lay in moving Liberals to action.

Meanwhile outside the House advanced Labour men, in the same way as the Clan-na-Gael, had begun to despise parliamentarianism, and preferred to rely upon their own organisations acting directly on the social body. The

Independent Labour Party proposed now, as Parnell had done, to have at its back all the energy of these outside forces, while employing parliamentary action. At the moment, indeed, the outside forces showed some tendency to become as detached from all normal and lawful methods of agitation as the Clan-na-Gael was. Some members of the Social Democratic Federation developed anarchist leanings, abolished the chairman at their conferences, and held frankly revolutionary meetings in Hyde Park. Four men were arrested at Walsall, for manufacturing bombs, and were sentenced to penal servitude. The publisher and proprietor of *The Commonweal*, the organ of socialism, were indicted for publishing a violent article, after this trial, denouncing the Home Secretary, the judge who tried the case, and the inspector of police who conducted it. They were sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour for incitement to murder.

But on the whole the Labour forces outside Parliament were not likely to become as embarrassing to their leaders as Irish dynamiters had been to Parnell, and the Trade Union Congress in the autumn, while it showed the vigorous influence of the new movement, confined itself to an effective and not at all extravagant programme. It instructed its Parliamentary Committee to prepare a scheme for Independent Labour representation; and it passed resolutions demanding an easier franchise qualification (of three months' residence, instead of a year's); the appointment as factory inspectors of men who had worked not less than five years in factories; and an eight-hours day. The last demand received an unexpected encouragement from a vote in favour of it given by the cotton operatives' trade unions. This was a great surprise, because the cotton hands had never hitherto favoured the movement; there were some who were inclined to attribute the vote less to conviction on a Trade Union theory than to a knowledge that there had been a good deal of over-

production in the trade, and that an eight-hours day would be a form of short time convenient to the operatives.

Unfortunately the winter in Lancashire was to pass under the shadow of something worse than short time. Affairs there had not been going well. The Ship Canal was proving disastrously costly; instead of the eight and a half millions which were to have covered all the cost of construction and the purchase of other undertakings, ten millions had already been spent, and it seemed likely that fourteen millions would be swallowed before the work was finished. Then depressed trade turned the cotton-masters to thinking of bimetallism, and seeking in that a cure for ills that had no connection with currency. Finally at the beginning of November the masters decided that they must make a 5 per cent. reduction in wages, and the operatives struck, asking for a short-time agreement instead. Fifty or sixty thousand operatives were out before the first week of the strike was over. It was expected to be a tough fight, because for some years the alternatives of short time or lowered wages in a trade crisis had been in dispute between masters and men, and now had come to trial; but that it would be a fight through the whole dark winter no one supposed. The strike added a sharper interest to the Conference of Women Workers at Bristol in November, which gave much of its time to the consideration and advocacy of womens' trade unions; the Women's Trade Union Association, meeting about the same time, had to confess to a year of poor results, although great efforts had been made.[1] The Bristol Conference, a sequel to the Conference of the Birmingham Union of Women Workers in 1890, also pressed forward the question of the appointment of women factory inspectors; and one of the first services of the new Liberal Government was to accede to this pressure,

[1] This was the Association's third yearly meeting.

Mr Asquith as Home Secretary appointing several women inspectors.

Naturally the new Government also went to work early in Ireland. Mr Morley, who had again taken the Chief Secretaryship, set up in October a Royal Commission to investigate the conditions induced by the steady course of evictions under the recent "resolute government." The bitterness of feeling was seen in the assertions of landlords that they would have nothing to do with the commission. The first petulance passed away, and the work seemed likely to proceed fairly smoothly, when a breeze between the judge who presided over the commission and certain lawyers who appeared for landlords brought ill-feeling back again; and in the end the landlords carried out their original threat, and declined to appear. Another matter in which the Ministry seized its new opportunities was the question of allotments. So much of their Social Reform programme had been taken from them that any point in which the arrogance of the other side might be pricked was of no small value. A return was at once prepared, and was published in August, showing how poor a thing the Allotments Act of 1887 had proved to be in the working. Instead of Mr Chamberlain's 100,000 men, it appeared from the returns that only 2891 tenants had been set up under the Act; and the perfunctory character of the Act was shown by the discovery that only fifty-six rural sanitary authorities (the local bodies which administered the Act) had acquired land, while five hundred and eighteen authorities had taken no steps at all.

There was some apprehension of distress as the winter approached. But in one sense the worst struggle of the unemployed appeared to be over; they no longer had to rouse the comfortable world to the fact of their existence and their starvation. The new Home Secretary speedily removed one of the old grievances by opening Trafalgar Square to meetings on Sundays, Saturdays and Bank

Holidays; though he ventured on ground which might have been provocative when he spoke of the mischief of holding meetings there day after day—the very thing which in extreme states of popular feeling was the most impressive means of action. But the concession was well received; all the energy of those who concerned themselves with the problem of unemployment could go to trying to devise remedies, and the Local Government Board was urged again to relax the rigidities of the Poor Law, and to sanction some form of relief organisation. It was at last being admitted that a neglected state of unemployment brought a terrible train of consequences, in that it finally submerged workmen who could never recover from a fortnight's failure of work, and were thrust down into pauperism beyond remedy. The official response was not very fruitful, but it was some acknowledgment of the difficulty. A Royal Commission on the Poor Law was set up. It was less concerned with immediate labour problems than with the subject of Old Age Pensions, to which it was obvious that the new Government must pay attention. The commission's work gradually narrowed itself down to this, and no effort was made to devise modifications of the Poor Law to meet the case of the unemployed. The commission did not represent in any way the new labour forces; John Burns declined to serve on it. The only Labour members were of the old school—Joseph Arch, and Henry Broadhurst. Mr Chamberlain was one of the commissioners; he had lately promulgated a "labour programme" which showed him for the first time out of real touch with those democratic movements which ten years before he had pre-eminently represented. He proposed to shorten hours of labour in mines and other dangerous employments; to set up arbitration tribunals; to found a system of contributory insurance for compensation for injuries, and for old age pensions; to limit pauper immigration; to increase the powers of local

authorities in matters of housing and town improvements; and to empower such authorities to advance money to working men to enable them to become owners of their houses. This last item, curious as it sounds now, was ardently advocated by Mr Chamberlain for a year or two. He had in fact undergone the inevitable change from his environment. He had not become a Tory; but he had missed the contact with the new element in democratic feeling by which such a man as he would have profited, if he had remained on the Liberal side. Even on his present side he did not overlook the existence of the new element; but he could have no contact with it, and the result was that he miscalculated it. He denied that the new Labour members represented any real force in the labour world, and that led him to mistake an advanced programme in the spirit of 1880 for an appeal to advanced labour.

Meanwhile the Salvation Army scheme was showing itself as founded rather on experience of destitution than on a proper understanding of the problem of unemployment. The honesty of the administration of the fund, and the adequate keeping of accounts, were established by the investigations of a committee which had undertaken the work at General Booth's request. But the committee found that the relief works of the Army were really underselling the market in lines of cheap labour, and were thus creating as much destitution as they relieved. It may be added here that the Salvation Army's years of street struggles now came virtually to an end; the clause in a Local Act, under which the Eastbourne authorities had repressed the Army's activities, was repealed by Parliament in this year; and when the Town Council tried to make by-laws permitting repression the Home Secretary refused his sanction. Active persecution of the Salvation Army may from this time be said to have ceased.

By the end of the year it was becoming terribly evident

that distress of a grievous kind, even if it did not amount to starvation, was at thousands of doors where no such visitant had been expected. In October a business with vast ramifications, called the Liberator Building Society, went into bankruptcy. The small savings of an immense number of people were in it; it had, indeed, never been an affair for large investments, but had acquired practically all its capital from the artisan and the small shopkeeper. The first announcement of its failure left, perhaps, some hope; the announcement in November that the Public Prosecutor had been approached in the matter began to put a different complexion on the state of the society's business.

As for the large investor, a bad trade year in Great Britain had kept his new interest in South Africa alive. The gold boom continued in a milder form, and Mr Rhodes was a stalwart figure to give the investor confidence in the possibilities of the territories he so largely controlled. He was in England again in the winter, rousing a great meeting of the British South Africa Company to enthusiasm for his schemes, which were now being revealed at their height. He spoke of telegraph lines from south to north of Africa by way of Uganda and Wady Halfa, and of an advance of civilisation by that route, which should, so to speak, take the dervishes in the rear, and remove the necessity of having to fight them. The idea was that other interruptions of the magnificent whole might also be removed without fighting. Complaints about the Boers' treatment of the gold industry, which had been making a slight appearance from time to time, were growing rather more loud. However, the hope was expressed that the backward nation which occupied the Transvaal might be removed from it ultimately without war; though references to "gratuitous germs of race bitterness" betray glimpses of the real feelings at work.

Alarm about cholera, from which England had been

free for some years, returned in the summer, when the presence of the disease at St Petersburg and Hamburg led to fears that it might be introduced into this country by immigrants. In the autumn there were a few cases in the ports on the English as well as on the French side of the Channel. The authorities had the more reason to be uncomfortable since a fever epidemic in London in the summer, 4000 cases being under treatment in September, had shown once again the prevalence of insanitary conditions. However, the cholera was successfully kept within bounds. The cases in England were limited to thirty-five, and the isolation arrangements were so good that in no single instance did the disease extend to other persons than those who landed in England with it upon them. That is to say, there was no spread of infection at all.

CHAPTER XV

1893: MR GLADSTONE'S LAST FIGHT

ALTHOUGH the Liberal majority was unreal for any purpose but that of Home Rule, the Government entered on its first serious session amid as much obloquy and fear from Conservatism as if it were a revolutionary junta in command of absolute power. Mr Gladstone was the sole cause of this attitude. In the clash of violent feeling roused during the Home Rule controversy of 1886 the personal dislike of him, active enough in the late seventies, had assumed an almost superstitious form. For a few years before the election of 1880 it was actually difficult for a London hostess to gather a dinner-party to meet Mr Gladstone, unless she was content to confine herself to his known adherents. His power of moving great audiences, his desire to move them, and the directions in which he wished to move them, appeared as a terrible break with the old gentleman-like politics in which he had been reared. Dread of his power grew to be a very large element in Queen Victoria's obvious mistrust of him; and she was only reflecting the feelings of the higher social ranks of the country. When he took up the cause of Home Rule, dislike was inflamed into hatred. He alone at that time could have created and held together a party against the furious attacks of the Tories and the Unionists; therefore the fact that he was there to do it focussed upon him the intense bitterness of feeling. A yet more amazing stage remained. That adoration of him on his own side which took such affectionate pride in the vigour of his old age, which gloried

in his capacity at eighty-three to lead one more Government to attempt Home Rule, which pinned its faith so fiercely to him as the "Grand Old Man," was answered on the other side by a belief, ridiculous as it might seem, that such a spirit in so old a man could only be attributed to some form of demoniac possession. Numbers of people, otherwise sensible, actually believed that there was something satanic in Mr Gladstone; and, once that superstitious feeling was aroused, his constant expression of his deeply religious convictions only made the case worse. The working of his mind, often involved, and showing such expertness in mental processes that the result was frequently a balanced pronouncement, in which simpler minds could see no finality, became in the eyes of the superstitious another sign of "possession"; they took it as a form of gathering into his toils those who, if they had read his real thoughts, would have ceased from following him. In the two Mr Gladstones of popular fancy—the Grand Old Man who would perform a miracle, and the Terrible Old Man who would ruin the Empire—the ordinary person's interest in politics was centred, not upon the new Government as a Government.

The times were not propitious. The great strike in Lancashire, which had begun in November, showed no signs of coming to an end, and hunger stalked through the cotton towns. Other industries were in a nervous, irritable condition which portended more strikes. At the same time the full effects of the Liberator bankruptcy began to be apparent; early in January it was said that the examination of the society's affairs was leading to the conclusion that the shareholders would lose everything, and the depositors would be fortunate if they got three or four shillings in the pound. Angry discussions raged as to the responsibility of prominent persons who had allowed their names to figure on the prospectus; but there were individuals upon whom it soon appeared that direct

punishment would fall. The man who was supposed to have been chiefly responsible for fraudulent handling of the funds, Jabez Spencer Balfour, had fled the country at an early stage of the disaster, and no one knew where he was. But three men were put on their trial, Hobbs, Wright and Newman, and though the evidence of the financial juggling which had gone on—the interweaving of building speculation with private borrowings which had, for instance, the prosecution alleged, transferred two millions sterling to the pockets of Hobbs from the Liberator's funds—was extremely complicated, the end of the trial was plain enough. Hobbs and Wright were sentenced to twelve years' penal servitude, and Newman to five years. In April, a month after the trial was over, news at last arrived of Balfour; he had been recognised at Buenos Ayres, and application had been made for his extradition. He was regarded as the real villain of the piece. Hobbs had only aspired to be Mayor of Croydon; but Balfour had posed as a financial magnate, with a great extravagant country house, a seat in Parliament, and a reputation for benevolence. He proceeded now to prove that at any rate the cleverness at the back of the Liberator frauds had been largely his contribution. His extradition was formally granted by the Argentine authorities on 17th April; he invented ingenious processes of the law by which he delayed for two whole years the carrying out of the extradition order, and almost caused his victims to despair of his ever being brought to justice. But meanwhile some vengeance had been taken; and energy was now turned to setting on foot a Relief Fund for those who had been ruined.

The cotton strike terminated on 24th March in the famous Brooklands agreement, which has ever since governed the relations of employers and employed in that industry. It provided that the immediate reduction of wages should be, not 5 per cent., against which the mill-

hands had struck, but 3 per cent. The more important feature of the agreement was that in future no changes should take place at intervals less than a year from the date of the last change, and that no single change should exceed 5 per cent. either of advance or of reduction; machinery for consultation and arbitration was also set up, and an arrangement made for establishing committees of the masters' and the men's organisations, two committees on either side, a lower and a higher, each of which should have not less than seven days, in a case of dispute, to consider its attitude. The agreement was hailed as a credit to Lancashire; it was also a remarkable sign of the new relations which labour was setting up with its employers. A strike was no longer an isolated affair, and no longer a simple affair; it contained various possibilities; it was almost always now a declaration of unity of which masters might take account, if they wished. The statistics of strikes showed an increasing number of disputes which were not about wages; thus in 1890 wages disputes were 62 per cent. of the whole, and in 1891 were 54 per cent. An equally significant fact was that in strikes undertaken purely to defend Trade Union principles, although the masters won rather more than half the battles, the cases which the strikers won were the far more important ones. These statistics of the industrial world had been published for several years past, and in this year the work of collecting and presenting them was put under a special branch of the Board of Trade, the Labour Department, which Mr Mundella, President of the Board, created.

During the winter the new education was of as much interest as the new Unionism. The two subjects were not devoid of a remote connection, because upper middle-class people, seeing prices disturbed, and conveniences of life affected, by the demands of workmen, began to question why they should at the same time be paying more for the education of those workmen. It was not a very reasonable

train of thought, but it was an enticing one. Local taxation, according to a Local Government Board report published in April of this year, was certainly tending to fall more heavily on the house-occupier and less on the landowner. Sometimes the grievance was put differently; the ratepayer complained that he was being mulcted for the education of the working classes, who then used their education to form unions, and endanger dividends. People grumbled increasingly at the effect of compulsory education in making the educated less content with their station in life; to meet them with more education was in this view deplorable. A time of uncertain trade and a wet, depressing winter made these grievances louder, so that it behoved the champions of education to bestir themselves. It was useless to blink the fact that the new education would not only go on making demands upon the national pocket, but would make ever-increasing demands. There was already a dearth of teachers in technical schools, and the state of the teaching staff of elementary schools cried aloud for more and better training colleges. The Duke of Devonshire, in his level-headed way, attacked the most prevalent ground of complaint; he argued that, instead of increasing the attempt to migrate from one class to another, technical education would diminish the "black-coat fetish," would set up an ideal of workmanship in place of the feeling that the desk-worker was a more respectable person than the skilled artisan, and so would diminish the tendency to congestion in the world of clerks and shop assistants. The answer made to this argument was that technical schools showed a danger of turning out bad artists rather than good craftsmen. It fell to Mr Balfour, speaking at Manchester, to remind the country that, after all, a progressive and energetic community like Manchester had had a Mechanics' Institute twenty years ago and a School of Art fifty-six years ago; the Technical Education Act had

only put upon a national basis work which the great industrial towns had found so desirable, that they had instituted private efforts to set it on foot long before anyone dreamed of it as proper work for public authorities. Meanwhile other speakers like Lord Justice Bowen reminded the public that education (which he called "the cultivation for market-purposes of brute brain power") was not thought of by its best supporters as supplanting morality and religion; a leaven had been set to work, and time must be given for its operation.

Parliament met on 31st January for what became the longest session that had ever been known. It sat till the third week in September, and then, with only five weeks' recess, sat again until the beginning of March 1894—a session of thirteen months. The Government introduced rapidly three large measures. The Home Rule Bill was produced in February, the Welsh Disestablishment Bill in the same month, and the Local Veto Bill at the beginning of March. But of these only the Home Rule Bill counted for the moment in the Liberal forces. The introduction of the other two might have been thought to have been designed, in some extraordinary failure of judgment, to serve as irritants during several months in which the Liberal party would be too much occupied to defend them in the country. The licensed victualling trade at once organised meetings against the Local Veto Bill; and even people well affected towards licensing reform were cooled by the production of a measure, which made no alterations in the system of licensing, but was devoted solely to such projects as establishing polls of districts, to be taken on the demand of ten persons, on the question of prohibiting the sale of liquor in the district, and setting up a form of public management of licensed houses with a bonus to the resident manager on the sale of non-intoxicants. It was little wonder that Mr Chamberlain saw as much profit in attacking this measure as in com-

bating Home Rule.[1] The Welsh Disestablishment Bill also provoked meetings against the Government all over England; and, as neither Bill was advanced a single stage in all this year, their production seemed a gratuitous rousing of opposition. Practically the whole of the time until the adjournment for the short recess in September was taken up by the Home Rule Bill. Its only novel feature as compared with the previous Bill[2] was the retention at Westminster of Irish members, their numbers being reduced from a hundred and three to eighty. But exactly what their position was to be, whether they were to vote on all subjects or only on Irish subjects, and what was to be said in the former case of a situation in which Irishmen might govern England, by holding the balance between parties, but Englishmen could not govern Ireland—these were the points of hottest dispute in the interminable debates in Committee. The second reading debate was a long one, and at the beginning of it the Opposition were not wholly united in their policy. A party meeting had to be called at the Carlton Club (it was notable as marking Lord Randolph Churchill's return to the fold of the orthodox on Irish questions); and, though some strong differences of opinion as to the method of fighting the Bill were expressed, the decision was ultimately taken for a solid vote against the second reading on 22nd April. Then the long Committee stage began; it occupied sixty-three sittings, and Mr Gladstone himself was not free from some responsibility for the inordinate length of the proceedings. The concentration of the past seven years upon the subject of Ireland had so preserved his energy, besides enlarging his store of knowledge, that he brought to these debates an incredible vigour. Unfortunately vigour with him meant copiousness; he maintained, in a House of Commons which had learned obstructive arts, the tradition of a day when these were unknown,

[1] *The Times*, 7th April 1893.

[2] See p. 181.

and the result was that his speeches offered a thousand points of petty debate, in sentences which he threw in merely for purposes of illustration or amplification.[1] Dull though the whole debate became to the world outside the walls of Parliament, there was little else to talk about. The introduction of the Bill had intensified the animosities in society, which were so bad for the spirit of the London season.

Then the business world was depressed by a disastrous failure of credit in Australia. In March banks began to suspend payment there, and the whole structure of credit in the colony was found to depend to a dangerous degree upon land speculation, which at a time of crisis dropped with a run. Banks had also been engaged in direct trading, and their capital was insufficiently paid up. Moreover, though the gold reserves were larger than in England, being on an average 20 to 25 per cent. of the deposits, as against an average of about 12 per cent. in England, they were not large enough for a country in which, owing to its isolation, securities were necessarily almost impossible to realise in a moment of difficulty. Out of fifteen large banks in Australia seven had suspended payment in April, and the crash had the more serious effects in England, because, oddly enough, there were few British shareholders, but a very large number of British depositors; one bank alone, the Commercial Bank of Australia, held British deposits to the amount of five or six millions. Such a disaster as this, following on the disaster to a less speculative class in the Liberator Society's downfall, disposed the country very ill to the reception of a Budget showing a deficit of a million and a half, and demanding an extra penny on the Income Tax. The alcohol revenue, which had been so strong a support of Mr Goschen's management of national finances, had fallen off heavily, as was usual in years of bad trade; and that enhancement of revenue which Sir

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 502.

William Harcourt was known to have in mind, the Death Duties, could not be proposed in a session so overwhelmingly occupied as this was by the Home Rule Bill. At this moment, too, a strike occurred which was more menacing and disturbing than recent strikes had been. It was a dock strike at Hull, and it arose out of unionists' refusal to work with non-unionists. We have had occasion to remark that the first threat of a shipping strike on these lines had been accompanied by peculiarly sharp exchanges from either side.[1] It was now to be seen that such appearances were not empty. The struggle at once became a severe one. The Seamen's and Firemen's Union joined the dockers; the Shipping Federation, now a virtually complete organisation of shipowners, would not yield an inch. The careful keeping of order which had distinguished other strikes gave way, and fires occurred at the docks which could hardly have been caused by anything but incendiarism. The military were called out. But the strike never became a widespread movement affecting other ports, and it ended after six weeks in the defeat of the men.

In June a trouble of a different kind descended upon the nation. While the fleet in the Mediterranean was carrying out some tactical exercises, the flagship, the *Victoria*, was rammed broadside by the *Camperdown*, and sank so rapidly that the Admiral in command, thirty-three officers, and three hundred and twenty men were drowned. The reason for the accident appeared to be that orders given for a certain turning movement of the two lines, in which the fleet was being handled, had been based on an error in calculating the distance between the lines, and the *Victoria* and the *Camperdown*, the leading ships, instead of clearing one another in the turn, came into collision. The news appalled the country, and was a grievous spot in a somewhat sorry year.

[1] See p. 280.

In July temper in the House of Commons grew pugnacious. The committee stage of the Home Rule Bill was placed under the operation of a closure resolution, bringing discussion to an end on successive sections of the Bill at certain hours. Considering the time that had been spent on the Bill, the Government seemed to have no alternative; but the resentment shown was far greater than in the previous applications of that kind of closure under the late Government. It flamed up at the end of the committee stage into a free fight on the floor of the House. Words had been used which created an uproar, and a Nationalist member, who had been shouting at an Ulster member, and could not make him hear in the noise, went to sit by him, to make sure of his hearing. A neighbour of the Ulster member pushed the Nationalist away, and that let loose the fight. The Speaker was sent for, and, as his dignified presence fortunately caused the fighting to die down, the incident terminated there and then. But it seemed to many people in the country characteristic of a misguided session, and of a year of irritable feelings. The summer witnessed a second strike which led to rioting, and this time with more serious results than had occurred at Hull. The prices of coal had been adversely affected by the prevailing weakness of trade, and the masters demanded a reduction of 25 points of the 40 per cent. advances in wages which had been conceded between 1880 and 1890. The strike against the reduction was not universal; the Northumberland and Durham miners never joined it, and the South Wales miners were only involved for a time. The Midlands, Yorkshire and Lancashire were the heart of the strike, and it was in Yorkshire that its most deplorable incident occurred. Men had been imported to work mines in South Wales and South Yorkshire, and the determination of the strikers to prevent this led to violent riots. Soldiers were drafted into those districts, and it happened that at Featherstone in South

Yorkshire a fight against blacklegging occurred on a day during Doncaster Races, The authorities had unwisely pursued their usual method of mustering police at Doncaster from other districts, making no special allowance for the disturbed state of the colliery regions. The result was that the strikers were able to move far too rapidly, and did so much damage to the colliery that, when the military arrived, the mob was completely out of hand. Orders were given to fire, and two men were killed. This brought a sharp attack upon Mr Asquith from Mr Keir Hardie, and an official inquiry was opened. But of course no blame could be attached; the colliery was in danger of being entirely wrecked, and the action of the mob, whatever its excuse, was not technically defensible. The report made by the committee of inquiry was that the soldiers were justified in firing; and the whole matter could only survive as one more grievance of the socialists against capital. Capital on its own side was not blind to the suggestions of counter-combination which the strike conveyed. In September there was no little talk of the formation of a huge Coal Trust, which should maintain the prices of coal. The ordinary point of view was that it was all very well for the miners to talk about a living wage, but, if the public would not buy the commodity, how could an artificial standard of wages be kept up? This gave a very plausible argument for a coal trust; by controlling prices, and establishing a sliding scale of wages in relation to the market, the trust could secure the men's position. But in point of fact the coalowners were so far from a spirit of combination that they could not even stand together during the strike. As the dispute lengthened out, and the price of coal rose, some of the masters found the temptation too much for them, and broke away from their own side, conceding the miners' terms, in order to have their pits at work. Those who did so were said to have made fortunes; but incidentally

they embittered the dispute on both sides. It dragged on throughout the autumn, with various side-issues. A Labour Disputes Bill was introduced at the end of July, to enable the Board of Trade to appoint a conciliator or inquirer in a dispute; no power was given to enforce any award that might be made, and the Bill was therefore regarded as bloodless. The great work that might be done by an official, inquiring into the two points of view, and acting as a channel of communication, was hardly likely to be foreseen at a time when strikes were at their sharpest. A more curious concomitant of the present strike was the spirit displayed at the annual meeting of the Chambers of Commerce in September. Never before had the gradual change from the old idea of free competition to a desire for State interference shown itself so clearly. The resolution in favour of compulsory arbitration boards had a fairly obvious connection with recent events. But it was curious to see the same spirit which animated working men moving now in the trading classes, in resolutions in favour of a State system of secondary education, of a reduction of railway rates, of graduated taxation designed to relieve the trading middleman, and of the creation of a department of Government for commercial affairs. It was small wonder that the philosophical economists, looking on, should say that socialism was now only a question of the degree to which State action was invoked, and was no longer a battle-ground between classes. This kind of comment was rendered much more possible by a change in the attitude of the leaders of professed socialism, a change which corrected the somewhat violent swinging of the pendulum during the disputes of the late eighties in London. May day of 1893 was made the occasion for the issue of a new socialist manifesto. It was the work rather of Mr Bernard Shaw, Mr Sidney Webb, and the Fabians, than of William Morris and the older school. It formulated definitely the return to political

economy in its pronouncement that moralisation of the conditions of a capitalist society would not serve as an ideal. Complete ownership by the community of the means of wealth, and the end of the wage-system, must be the goal. At the same time the manifesto repudiated the anarchist tendencies which had made their appearance, not so much in actual violence, as in the doctrine that all tinkering reform should be opposed, in order that the flood might gather for revolution. The new manifesto, on the contrary, urged that all ameliorative measures should be accepted, as giving the workman more leisure and more equipment to work for a new social order. In practice, therefore, socialists would use their efforts for an eight-hours day, for the establishment of a minimum living wage, for the suppression of sweating and sub-contracting, and for universal suffrage. In other words, the socialist would not stand outside politics, but would be in the midst of them, distinguishable from a Radical only by the end he kept in view, and not at all by his conduct at any given time. Fifteen years later it was to be difficult for many Liberals to say whether they were socialists or not.

An immediate sequel to this new attitude on the part of the socialists was the formation of the Independent Labour Party. An earlier attempt to form such a party in 1888 had failed. In 1893 a conference was held in Bradford, with better results, and the I.L.P. was constituted, "with the object of securing the collective ownership of all the means of production, distribution and exchange, by means of direct Labour representation in Parliament and on local authorities." It was the natural outcome of the arrival in Parliament of the new spirit infused into trade unions during the eighties—of Mr Keir Hardie's tweed cap and brass band. He was elected the first President of the party.

When the Home Rule Bill at last went to the House of

Lords, at the beginning of September, its course was speedily run. There had already been one small brush between the two Houses. The London County Council, in its Bill for constructing a proper approach to the south side of the Tower Bridge, attempted once more to establish the "betterment" principle. It had asked for the support of other corporations, and so much ground had been won for the idea since its inception that its advocates in the House were not confined to one side. The clause, after passing the Commons, was cut out of the Bill by the Lords. But on the return of the Bill, the Commons insisted by a majority of 221 to 88 on the retention of the clause, many Unionists voting for it, although the stronghold of Unionism—Birmingham—had not been persuaded to support the principle. The Lords, however, were in no mood for agreement, and again struck out the clause. For the Irish Bill they mustered in astonishing force. Lord Spencer moved the second reading on 5th September; the Duke of Devonshire moved the rejection of the Bill; and on 8th September the House divided. There were 41 votes for the Bill, and 419 against it. The division has certainly one feature of interest. Some measure of the almost passionate feeling against Home Rule is given by the great size of the vote. That in September, sacred month of sport, the House of Lords should have felt it necessary not only to reject the Bill—fifty men could have done that—but to overwhelm it, to obliterate it, to stamp it out of existence, shows what kind of opposition had been aroused.

Mr Gladstone had let it be known, before the Bill was introduced, that he did not intend to make its inevitable rejection by the House of Lords a ground for immediate dissolution. The Commons had turned to other work. They took up, not the two large and controversial measures which had been formally introduced early in the session, but two of a sound popular appeal. One was the Parish

Councils Bill, extending the system of local government to smaller areas than the counties, and the other, which chiefly occupied the remainder of the year in Parliament, was an Employers' Liability Bill, one more amendment of the existing Acts. It brought domestic servants under the Act; and it also cleared away the last confusions about "common employment," making the employer liable for accidents due to the negligence of a fellow-workman. A more doubtful provision was that allowing the removal to the High Court of a claim for more than £100; the value of compensation to a workman's family would be seriously diminished by months of delay. The real point of struggle, however, was in the repeal of the power of "contracting out" of liability. The chief justification for "contracting out" had been the existence in very many cases of accident insurance societies, maintained by large firms for the benefit of their workmen; it was reasonably argued that, if employers were to be liable, without distinction, to actions for compensation, none of them would add to their burden the maintenance of such societies.

In October the distress and disturbance of the coal strike grew so serious that the mayors of the Midland towns met to try to arrange a settlement. As this was just the period at which some of the masters were giving way, the opportunity was hardly favourable, and the attempt failed. For another month the dispute remained as it was. Then the Government was moved to intervene, and was able to arrange a conference of fourteen coal-owners and fourteen representatives of the miners, to meet at the Foreign Office under the chairmanship of Lord Rosebery. Not only did the conference succeed in coming to terms, but it laid the foundation of a system which was to prove as lasting an instrument of negotiation between masters and men as the Brooklands agreement in the cotton trade. Their immediate point the men won;

they were to return to work at their old wages, not subject to the deduction the masters originally claimed, until 1st February 1894; and meanwhile a Conciliation Board of fourteen from each side, under an impartial chairman, was to consider the position and make an award.

For the moment, however, the advanced labour men were concerning themselves with "the right to work." The directions to Poor Law authorities under the Act of 1818 were recalled, and in December Mr Keir Hardie moved a resolution in the House expressing the new idea. But he found only thirty-three to support him, and the general opinion was that the efforts of Poor Law authorities to deal with unemployment by providing work were inevitably wasteful. A Mansion House Conference reported at the end of the year against the notion of relief works, saying that the employment which could be provided in that way was only intermittent, and the knowledge that it was being provided attracted men out of work in other places, so producing a worse congestion of labour. A deputation to Mr Gladstone on the subject took place on 28th December, and received a reply on lines similar to those of the report.

Far more directly profitable was a widely spread discussion which arose out of the debates on the Employers' Liability Bill. The question of what could fairly be called ground for compensation brought up the case of trade injuries, which were not, strictly speaking, accidents. The most flagrant instance was that of lead poisoning, caused by glazing processes in the manufacture of china and earthenware, which had in the previous year been declared by the Home Secretary a dangerous trade, under the terms of the Act of 1891. Mr John Burns and other Labour members had spoken very strongly in the course of the debates, and a committee had been appointed by the Home Office. It reported that it was unable to recommend the prohibition by law of the use of white lead in such pro-

cesses; but it endorsed to the full the terrible charges which had been made. Certain administrative rules were proposed, and it was hoped that by insistence on better ventilation, to carry off the powdered lead in the air, and better provisions for cleanliness on the part of the workers engaged, the use of white lead might be rendered almost, if not quite, innocuous.

In truth the mind of the ordinary public was not concerned with the doings of this long-lingering session. Its real interest in December was the Ardlamont murder trial. A baffling case had arisen out of the death at the end of August of a young man of considerable possessions in Scotland. He had been found one day shot on his estate at Ardlamont, and his tutor, a man named Monson, was arrested. The trial took place in Scotland, and ended in the Scottish verdict of "not proven." It expressed probably the feelings of most of those who had followed the case; and they were by far the greater part of the population.

Those who hardly found the murder a subject to their taste had enough to discuss in a new play, *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, which made its appearance in the autumn of this year. It seemed at the time to be a portentous change in native drama, which had hitherto shown no inclination towards a theatrical presentation of social or moral problems. Such indigenous character as it had shown hitherto was rather in the vein of caricature, and, at the best, of comedy. The burlesques of notable operas, which succeeded one another steadily at the famous Gaiety Theatre, were an imported idea; but the Gilbert and Sullivan "comic operas" were an entirely native product, and in the early nineties a new form of entertainment, more loosely constructed, and amounting sometimes to little more than a series of "star" turns connected by a vague thread of story, had grown up out of the "comic operas." It was so suc-

cessful that people with a serious interest in the theatre began to think that the taste for the modern music halls was going to be the death of the drama in England. This feeling had coincided curiously with a largely increased interest, among people of social standing, in the theatre as such, and in artists of the theatre. It had not been an interest in drama; indeed *The Times*, in commenting on it, remarked complacently that no menace to British standards of morals and conventions was to be apprehended from the new fashion of going to see the performances of French plays by French theatrical companies in London. But comedy had undergone a revival in the works of Wilde and Barrie; and the Independent Theatre had gathered a public for the drama of social ideas. The theatres were ready for a bid in this direction, and *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* was produced. It gave us an actress of a wholly new type in Mrs Patrick Campbell; and it also gave London engrossing matter of small talk for the winter.

CHAPTER XVI

1894: LE BOURGEOIS ÉPATÉ

THE year that followed was not devoid of important political events. It witnessed the withdrawal of Mr Gladstone from Parliament, the production of the Death Duties Budget, the enunciation of the "two-Power standard" as a naval ideal, and other incidents less lasting in their effect. But the year bears quite as deeply marks of the shocks experienced in its course by the respectable strata of England, from the height of the upper ranks of the services, and the professions, down to the levels of retail trade. It was a year in which the face of a startled *bourgeoisie* looks out from every month. None of the shocks came from quite unexpected directions; but they were not the less startling.

Early in the year the rather vague horror of anarchism was focussed by an extraordinary explosion in Greenwich Park; during a fog on 15th February a Frenchman, Bourdin, was blown to pieces by a bomb which he was carrying. The incident followed closely on the execution in Paris of a man named Vaillant, who had thrown a bomb into the Chamber of Deputies. It followed also a long period of more or less reasonable uneasiness in England about the currents and cross-currents of socialism. The case of the Walsall anarchists [1] had given unnecessary prominence to a small group which had formed itself inside the Labour movement. Yet that it was not wholly a negligible group is clear from the repudiation of anarchism in the new socialist manifesto of May day 1893. There

[1] See p. 317.

had been a new tone in the meetings of men on Tower Hill; the unemployed were still numerous, still united in a kind of loose organisation by daily meetings; and they varied the monotony of meetings by parading the West End squares. But their actions would have had less importance if they had not succeeded in catching public attention by a disgusting phrase; their favourite threat was to send police and officials "to heaven by chemical parcel post."[1] About this time, too, a club of foreign anarchists in Soho became a familiar name to the public—the Autonomie Club. Upon these definite things respectable people vented a great deal of respectable fury. The abuse by anarchists of the asylum offered by this country to foreign refugees, the inertness of the police in the matter of the Autonomie Club (which can hardly, once it was so well known, have been the source of any anxiety to the police), the threats uttered at Tower Hill meetings, had led to many murmurings before the Greenwich explosion acted as detonator to all the stored-up anger. Writers of letters to the newspapers had their counterparts among humbler people who thought dynamite, like knives in a quarrel, a "dirty foreign trick," and the funeral procession which followed Bourdin was attacked by a mob near Fitzroy Square. Many foreigners had gathered there to see it pass, and though the police diverted the procession in order to avoid an outbreak, the anti-anarchist forces deployed on the new route in time to make a very considerable riot. Throughout the year the smallest excuse served for a little homily to Labour men or to trade unions on their neighbourhood to these deplorable anarchists.

The solid kind of Briton, who presented a less disturbed front to these anxieties, suffered from qualms of a more searching nature. The national solidity itself was, he

[1] The phrase was in existence some years earlier, but it now became common.

lamented, being sapped. The Pre-Raphaelite painters, whose work he had regarded as maundering and unhealthy, he now saw acclaimed. The death of Ford Madox Brown in 1893 had called forth the warmest appreciations of his work and his influence; now in the very beginning of 1894 the solid Briton read that Burne-Jones had been made a baronet, and rubbed his eyes still more in amazement. He began to feel himself a stranger in his own art-dealers' rooms. If he went to the theatre he saw a procession of "women with a past" following *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* across his stage. When he read novels he found books like *Keynotes*, *The Yellow Aster*, *Dodo* and *Esther Waters*, upsetting equally his views of what women should be thinking about and his idea of what novelists should write about. *The Yellow Book* presented the work of Aubrey Beardsley to his astonished eyes. On country roads he met women not only riding bicycles, which he had not as yet admitted to be a proper occupation for them, but actually riding them without the hampering accompaniments of either a skirt or a chaperon. The "new woman" with her symbolical latch-key was a purely middle-class product; and she shook that class profoundly. She was so mixed in her qualities. It was all very well to have a wholesome dislike of her novels and dismiss them as neurotic; but somehow she had a way of presenting herself also in athletic shapes on the tennis-lawn or the golf-links (the latter were just now sadly depleting the former, and the "tennis girl" was dropping out of fashion) which defied the Briton to be otherwise than proud of her. Then just when he was feeling proud, the same girls would light cigarettes, and talk slang, or they would thunder round ballrooms in the *pas de quatre*. If he consoled himself with the thought that after all not every young man was too decadent, or every young woman too emancipated, to think of one another, he was reminded by the charming *Dolly Dialogues* that, even when they

did think about one another, they did it in strange new ways which no old-fashioned Briton could wholly approve.

Such cross-currents made the national temper a complex thing for any Government to ride; and now the Liberal Government had to ride it without Mr Gladstone's control. His resignation of the Premiership was inevitable, yet it could not have been more inopportune for his party. Even before the labour of the second Home Rule Bill he had been forced to recognise a failure in himself, not of intellectual but of physical powers—and among those only of his hearing and his eyesight—which he could not but admit to be the limit of his political career.[1] He had been able to give the Bill not only his constant guidance in the House, but that exacting measure of guidance which his high standard of duty demanded; he had been able to take his very large share in the work of a long session. When therefore, with the New Year, rumours arose of his intention to retire they carried no conviction. Mr Gladstone was at Biarritz in January, and he returned to the somewhat dismal winding-up of the session. In his own mind his course of action had been settled. The immediately determining cause, sufficing to turn the scale in the final moment of decision, was disagreement with his colleagues in the matter of the Naval Estimates; he could not accept a policy of dominant naval power in Europe without reference to any particular question of the day[2]; and such a policy had in effect been the outcome of the naval defence agitations of the past few years. The question of the efficiency of the navy had been raised in a vague way, and efficiency cannot be determined without a standard. No current events provided one. The only thing that could provide it was an assertion of dominance in Europe; and to that assertion Mr Gladstone declined

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 496.
[2] *Ibid.* iii. 508.

to subscribe.[1] This was enough to give him the parting of the ways which otherwise, at a juncture of no favourable presage for his colleagues, he would have been the last man to see.

The whole overgrown session left the Liberals with but one harvested sheaf—the Parish Councils Bill—and that not perfect in their eyes; the House of Lords had introduced alterations in it. But rather than lose this measure also the Government accepted the alterations. They did not affect the main structure of the Bill. The Urban District Councils which it set up were the old urban sanitary authorities renamed and made elective; they controlled matters of drainage, roads, infectious diseases and lighting; they had power to promote private Bills, though the Local Government Board watched this power jealously, and only permitted its exercise in cases in which a Provisional Order could not be made; and they had the County Council's power of delegating work to committees. The Rural District Councils were newer authorities. The sharpest point of controversy in the Bill was that providing that the Rural District councillor should represent his parish on the Board of Guardians. As the rural district and the union were most frequently identical in boundary this meant a popularly elected Board of Guardians, and the electoral qualification was lower than any ever yet known, no property stipulations being attached to it. Hence the strength of that attack upon the Bill which consisted in pointing out that the electors of the new Guardians were very largely prospective, or at least possible, candidates for relief. Parish Councils, which were the final subdivision of the new Local Government, were given certain powers as to sanitation and highways, without becoming statutory authorities for these duties; and they were also given powers, which

[1] He went so far as to speak in private of the Naval Estimates as "mad and drunk."

were to become more important later on, in regard to the provision of allotments.

No other Bill of importance had survived. The Home Rule Bill had been rejected by the House of Lords, the Employers' Liability Bill so fundamentally changed that the Government abandoned it. The Lords had insisted on the retention of the clause permitting "contracting out." But although meetings here and there might show signs of indignation, the feelings of the country were not strongly roused. Could Mr Gladstone have roused them? He felt that the time had come at any rate for an attempt—that the virtual destruction of the work of an exhausting session could be made "the right moment for a searching appeal to public opinion." [1] From Biarritz he suggested dissolution to his colleagues, but received a "hopelessly adverse reply." It must have been a somewhat dreary state of mind which dictated the reply; and it gave, no doubt, a fresh impulse to Mr Gladstone's inclinations towards retirement. Even amid all the rumour and expectation of his retirement no one recognised his farewell to Parliament. On 1st March he spoke on the acceptance of the Lords' amendments to the Parish Councils Bill, and when, "upright as ever, and walking fast, with his despatch-box dangling from his right hand," [2] he had passed behind the Speaker's chair, members dispersed talking casually about the speech. Only one or two men, as they left the precincts of the House, were struck by the sudden thought that they would probably never hear Mr Gladstone in Parliament again. In two days members were talking about that speech in new tones; and those whose eyes had not happened to follow Mr Gladstone on that day knew that they had missed the historic sight of his final withdrawal from the House he had entered sixty-one years before.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 505.
[2] Mr G. W. E. Russell's *One Look Back*.

On 3rd March he handed his resignation to the Queen. Generations to whom his name conveys less of love, as well as less of hatred, than it conveyed to his own time, read with astonishment the account of that final interview. It is from Mr Gladstone himself that we have it, in phrases of the greatest dignity, untouched by injured feelings.[1] At the first moment, indeed, the Queen showed apparent emotion, but she promptly recovered herself, so completely that she marked the close of over fifty years of public service by thanking her aged minister for—"a service of no great merit, in the matter of the Duke of Coburg"! Otherwise there was "not one syllable on the past." He had slipped quietly out of the House of Commons; Queen Victoria allowed him to slip quietly out of Windsor Castle. He himself was thinking, finely enough, less of the past than of the future. He knew how much might depend on the appointment of his successor; already the rumours concerning him had given rise to some strong expressions among Liberals as to the need, at such a moment of conflict between the two Houses, of keeping the Premiership in the House of Commons. Mr Gladstone, curious as it may seem in view of his recent wish to dissolve on that conflict, did not agree with this feeling. He intended, if he were consulted, to advise the Queen to send for Lord Spencer; and although there is no established custom of the Crown asking advice in such matters, Mr Gladstone might be pardoned for feeling that his unparalleled length of service and his unique position with his party would have rendered his advice in this case most valuable. It was, indeed, unbelievable to the Liberal party that Mr Gladstone was not consulted by the Queen. He had opportunity to intimate to Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's private secretary, that he had "something serious to say," if the Queen commanded him. She preferred to take her own course, and on 6th March the Liberal party

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 513, 514.

found itself under the leadership not only of a peer, but of a peer who was comparatively young, and had taken no great part in recent struggles. The Queen had entrusted the formation of the new Ministry to Lord Rosebery. It must be noted that, if Mr Gladstone had been consulted, the party would none the less have found itself led by a peer. The truth was that, had a leader been sought for in the Commons, the choice must necessarily have fallen on Sir William Harcourt; and his was a character which many of his colleagues would have found intolerably overbearing in a Prime Minister. He would beyond doubt have found great difficulty in forming a Cabinet. Lord Rosebery, on the other hand, had no trouble in securing the co-operation of his colleagues; they were loyal beyond what might have been expected. But two days after the opening of the new session, which took place on 1st March, the Government sustained a defeat on the Address. Mr Labouchere, who led the Radical feeling against the House of Lords, and scoffed at the policy of carrying on Government and allowing the Lords to "fill the cup of iniquity" by rejecting more measures, until the country should find the situation too much to bear, moved an amendment to the Address, praying the Queen to end the power of the House of Lords to deal drastically with measures passed by the House of Commons. A combination of Radicals and Irish members with some other members carried this amendment by 147 votes to 145. It was not of course thought for a moment that the new Government would resign on such a vote, but it made at least an uneasy start. Then the Home Rule odium, which Lord Rosebery had done his best to escape by all means short of actually repudiating Home Rule (if indeed they *were* short of it), was revived by a discussion of a proposal to send all Scottish Bills to a Scottish Grand Committee, which was accompanied immediately by a proposal from a young Welsh member,

Mr Lloyd George, for a similar Grand Committee for Wales.

Fortunately Sir William Harcourt was able this year to introduce the Death Duties Budget which had been postponed the year before; and this measure was Radical enough, in its imposts on large accumulations of property, and accompanying extension of abatements of Income Tax on the lower scales of incomes, to pull the party together. The new duties were a tax on all property, real or personal, settled or not settled, passing on the death of any person dying after 1st August 1894; the tax varied from £1 per cent. on estates over £100 but under £500, up to £15 per cent. on estates over a million sterling. Naturally the proposal roused the sharpest opposition; the extreme criticism was that this doctrine amounted to an assertion that the State had a right to what property a man left behind him, and that the succession to it of his heirs would be for the future only a matter of indulgence. However, Sir William Harcourt managed his Bill with patience and so much command of the House that the Bill made admirable progress without any use of severe forms of procedure, and was despatched by the House of Commons in July. It included an enhanced Beer Tax. There had been a deficit of two and a quarter millions to meet (not a single European country, as it happened, escaped a deficit this year)[1]; and although the new death duties would in time be very profitable they were for the present somewhat counterbalanced by the extension of Income Tax abatements; and the Naval Estimates were heavy. There was no great sympathy with the brewers' outcry against the increased taxation of beer; but the Local Veto Bill was in existence, and the extra sixpence a barrel was therefore regarded by its victims less as a piece of taxation than as an act of political warfare.

[1] See the *Punch* cartoon, 27th January 1894.

The Local Veto Bill was dropped later in the session. It had had the disastrous effect of irritating moderate people all over the country, and this, far more than the active opposition of the licensed victualling trade, was the cause of the Bill's extreme unpopularity. There was a growing belief that the drinking habits of the country were undergoing a profound modification from changes in public opinion, which would be more effective and more lasting than any reforms by legislation could be. Lord Randolph Churchill, who had lately been devoting himself to the licensing question, had found it thorny and unfruitful.

The Naval Estimates for which the Budget had to provide showed the serious advance of three millions. That tendency to pursue a policy of dominance in European naval affairs with which Mr Gladstone had tried to contend, was given alike an impulse and a standard of effort by the visit in this year of the Russian fleet to Toulon, in demonstration of the treaty which had been negotiated between France and Russia. The meeting of the two allied fleets set comparisons going; and the general overhauling of our state of defence, which had occupied the minds of anxious members of the public for months past, was followed by discussions of whether Great Britain had or had not a navy superior to the allied fleets. From this year, therefore, we may date the appearance of the "two-Power standard" as a controlling consideration in naval policy.

Meanwhile in another kind of rivalry some attempt was being made to reform our system of secondary education; the example of Germany and her growing mastery in trading methods were perpetually being dinned into the ears of the Government. A Royal Commission on Secondary Education was appointed in March, notable, if for nothing else, for the fact that it included three women commissioners—Lady Frederick Cavendish, Mrs Henry Sidgwick and Mrs Sophie Bryant. There was, however,

a strong feeling that if Germany afforded England a warning of one kind, France offered a contrary one in her immense production of men educated to the level of clerkdom and petty officialism. The National Union of Teachers was asking itself whether any real elementary education, beyond the acquisition of a cheap veneer, was in existence. On the other hand, a man of such sober stamp as the Duke of Devonshire, not at all likely to be misled by superficial appearances, was telling a Lancashire audience in November that great changes in outlook had already been wrought, and that working people had now not only the education that enabled them to earn money, but the far more valuable education that taught them how to expend it. German influence was not without its effect in higher spheres of education: in this year Oxford at last established a "research degree," to be attained by a post-graduate course of study open to those who were not members of the university. In May Professor Henry Morley died. He had taken no small share in the spreading of inexpensive culture, as distinct from mere education, by editing the most successful series current at the time of cheap reprints of the best English literature and translations of foreign classics.

In April the long and difficult work of the Royal Commission on Labour Disputes came to an end with the publication of its report. It was not a very vigorous document. Even the much-discussed solution of difficulties by the establishment of industrial tribunals received but tentative support. The report pointed out that the strength of trade unions varied so much that no general system of tribunals could be proposed. Moreover such bodies could only deal, in the opinion of the commission, with interpretation of existing conditions; voluntary arbitration boards alone could be useful where a change of conditions was in question. The more direct recommendations were, firstly, that the Board of Trade

should be given more distinct powers for appointing arbitrators: "if the same persons were frequently appointed they would become arbitration experts, and might then have some kind of permanent appointment"; and, secondly, that the Factory Acts should be more stringently applied, with a view to driving out badly managed industries dependent on cheap alien labour, which tended to lower wages. The commission also suggested that a better definition of "picketing" by trade unions was necessary. A supplement to the report appeared later in the form of some suggestions made by the Duke of Devonshire and other members of the commission, to the effect that associations both of employers and employed should be given existence as statutory corporations, so that either could be sued for breach of contract—a liability which, while it would not prevent strikes, might check hastiness in entering upon them. The question immediately raised by this notion was whether the power to enforce subscriptions from members, which a corporation possesses, would be held by the trade unions to countervail the liability to be sued as unions for the torts of members. A further supplement, being a separate report on the conditions of agricultural labour, was only interesting in that it spoke of those conditions as much improved, and the buying power of the rural labourer as much advanced. The whole report was hardly one on which action could be taken. No one was in a mood for small tinkerings of the problem. On the one hand the alarm about anarchism—a debate in January on the report of the committee of inquiry into the Featherstone riots kept alive the inclination to take panic-stricken views of labour unrest—was hardening feeling against trade unions, the congresses of which had for some years grown more and more socialistic in tone. On the other side the return from the old attitude of detachment from purely political controversy, the revulsion towards the use of

parliamentary power, had grown so strong that socialist leaders were announcing their intention to abandon strikes in favour of an organised effort by political action to obtain control of the means of production.[1] The same spirit was working in the unions; the presidential address at the Trade Union Congress in September turned on the idea that "Legislate" was to become more and more the watchword of the movement. Caught somewhat in a tender spot by this new enthusiasm, Conservatives began to remember uncomfortably that between the two political parties the difference in regard to State interference was one only of degree, not of principle; and while this might have mattered little so long as the interference was not at the dictation of Labour, but was pure benevolence, Tories felt it time to draw back when the new force proposed to take a hand in the interference. Consequently even Mr Chamberlain's programme, little as it really carried of the true labour sentiment, was more brusquely treated by his allies when he revived it this year than it had been on its appearance in 1893.[2] The freedom of the year from serious strike troubles failed to reassure the anxious *bourgeois*. The only strike of any note was one of cabmen in London in the summer. It turned partly on the now common objection of unionists to working with non-unionists, but chiefly on a question of the charges made by the cab-owners for the hire of cabs. The strike lasted nearly a month, much to the inconvenience of London at the height of its season; and it ended in the diminution of the masters' charges, balanced by the men's abandonment of their objection to non-unionists in the yards. A small incidental complaint of the men is noteworthy as a sign of changing customs; there were now, they said, so many large Stores that ladies, when they went

[1] See, *e.g.*, a letter by Mr Hyndman in *The Times*, 16th May 1894.

[2] *The Times*, 17th October 1894.

shopping, had less need of cabs than they had in the old days, when they were obliged to journey from shop to shop. The Coal Conciliation Board made its award, and secured peace in that industry for a time by renewing the two last 5 per cent. advances in wages until 1st January 1896; the men on their side showing less tendency to take the uncompromising position that wages should not depend upon, but govern, market prices.

The great event of the early summer, however, concerned none of these things, but was the Derby Day, when Lord Rosebery won with Ladas. He was never secure after that in his leadership of the Liberal party. His achievement was one more of the shocks of the year to an ultra-respectable public. Not a very great number, perhaps, went with the National Anti-Gambling League and its spokesman, Mr Hawke, in demanding that Lord Rosebery should choose between the Premiership and the Turf. But there were certainly many who felt that Turf interests, if not actively harmful, were not a dignified trait in the successor of Mr Gladstone; many again who felt that a party recently vocal against the gilded irresponsibilities of the peers was oddly led to triumph at Epsom. Add these mixed feelings to the prejudices and disaffection under which Lord Rosebery entered on his Premiership, and the result was enough disagreement in the party to render it somewhat ineffective. The famous Budget passed the House of Lords without a division; it enjoyed the traditional impunity of a Finance Bill in that House. But the Evicted Tenants Bill, founded on the work of the commission whose appointment had been one of the first acts of the new Government in 1893, was thrown out; and went to help in the "filling of the cup." In effect the Bill would have authorised an evicted tenant in Ireland to regain his farm over the landlord's head by decree of the Estates Commissioners, if the landlord had acted "unreasonably" in the eviction. For a time Liberal concern

for Ireland occupied itself with the Royal Commission on Financial Relations between Ireland and Great Britain, which was designed to remove from the path of the next Home Rule Bill a difficulty which had greatly impeded the two Bills of Mr Gladstone. A Registration Acceleration Bill (which incidentally gave one more chance for the Woman Suffragists to advance their claims) was dropped. In spite of their apparent truculence, the House of Lords chose this year to pass the principle of "betterment" against which they had stood firm until now. The committee was composed of such peers as Lord Halsbury, Lord Salisbury, Lord Egerton of Tatton, Lord Belper and Lord Onslow; it is evident that the principle must have made considerable headway with the general public. This removed the final difficulty in the completion of the Tower Bridge, by making possible an adequate approach from the south side; the bridge itself was finished and was formally opened in June.

From time to time during 1894 South African affairs came disturbingly into view. The British South Africa Company had been engaged in war with the Matabele, and the dual position of Mr Cecil Rhodes, who was now Prime Minister of Cape Colony as well as managing director of the Chartered Company, was apt to lead to situations in which he appeared to be using the authority of the one office to advance the interests of the other. He had cast a glamour over the British public; his vigorous imagination had made so vivid the idea of a British South Africa, "which must ultimately mean the whole region south of the Zambesi,"[1] that it appeared as almost an established national policy. Consequently when in the summer the question of the status of British subjects in the Transvaal was raised again, the Boers found themselves addressed less as the independent nation which they were in their own eyes than as a population which was rather

[1] *The Times*, 20th June 1894.

obstinately delaying a general federation of South Africa. A "Transvaal National Union" was set on foot, to demand the franchise for all foreigners resident in the Transvaal; and its proceedings were strong enough to bring upon it a temperate reminder from England that the grant of the franchise must, by all international custom, deprive its members of their previous nationality, a dilemma little to their taste, since serious trouble had but just been avoided this year by the abandonment of the Boer claim to the right of "commandeering" alien residents. If they ceased to be aliens, there would be no grounds for refusing military service. The situation in the Transvaal in general had been so much upset by the numbers of immigrants in connection with the mines, and by the vast wealth which those mines enabled a section of the foreign population to wield, that President Kruger was requesting, as yet without any aggressive tone, a revision of the constitution established by the Convention of London.

In the autumn the licensing sessions of the London County Council produced more shocks for the respectable. The growth of the taste for music halls has already been noted more than once. The placing of the licensing authority for such halls in the hands of the council brought a new spirit of criticism to bear upon them. The kind of human traffic which could be left unanalysed—or at any rate *was* left unanalysed—among the various elements that made up the attractions of the old "gardens" of Vauxhall and Ranelagh and Cremorne became somewhat too obvious in the more confined spaces of a music hall. Moreover certain specific performances, especially in this year the presentations of "Living Pictures" on the stage, once they had definitely shocked some people, could hardly be passed over in silence at licensing sessions. But prudery is easily pushed into an ugly and unpopular position, and, on the whole, public opinion sided with the music halls; the latter, too wise to

be defiant, moderated their customs enough to tide over the attack of the champions of morality.

Another kind of alarm worried the middle class, in respect to its pockets. In January the Manchester Ship Canal was opened, but without any enthusiasm from those who had subscribed the millions sunk in its construction. Early hopes had been dashed by the great discrepancy between the estimated and the actual cost of the work; and the enterprise was now felt to be launched rather in faith than in hope. For the general investing public, the South African booms, first in gold mines, and secondly in chartered company projects, had produced a very speculative market in which the company promoter had gone to work. The consequence was that, in a time not otherwise bad for trade, millions were being lost every year; the report of the Inspector-General in Liquidation published this year showed that in 1892 the public had lost no less than twenty-five millions by investments in more or less fraudulent companies. The Board of Trade once more set up an inquiry into company law.

Another activity of that Board marks the practical development at last of an enterprise which we found making several false starts in the early eighties. The time had arrived for considering seriously the regulations which Government should apply to the establishment of electric traction on tramways; and the Board of Trade called various experts in consultation. Ten years earlier the propulsion of trams by transmission of current from overhead wires to motors on the car had been successfully achieved in Kansas City, U.S.A. Here was the idea which obviated all the old difficulties, alike of carrying stored power in cells and laying down "live" rails. But no example of its use occurred in England until November 1891, when the Roundhay Electric Tramway at Leeds, five and a half miles in length, was

opened. It was owned by the corporation, but leased to a company. Its success was now established, and immense developments of the principle were so certain that the Government regulations of this year set free an abundant stream of enterprise. Municipalities which already owned tramways set to work to convert them to the new system; and those which did not found a fresh incentive to purchase the undertakings of private companies, since electricity now promised efficient, clean, quiet and cheap traction. The London County Council at once advanced its purchase schemes energetically, and they became prominent in municipal history, because the council based its terms of purchase on a calculation of what it would have had to spend to construct the tramway, a basis which was bitterly attacked as unfair to the companies. At the very last moment, so to speak, of tramway development, one more invention of a different kind of propulsion made its appearance. It is of less interest as a belated tramway invention than as a sign of the influence of the internal combustion motor. It was a gas-driven tramcar, using engines of the Otto type, exploding gas in the piston-cylinders by means of an electric spark.

England was still watching helplessly the advance of motor-car invention abroad. From her own roads such cars were banned. The chief centre of activity was France, where several firms were now showing what astonishing power and force internal combustion engines could produce. In this year a race of motor cars from Paris to Rouen was organised, and the results gave a great impetus to the industry.

In December, Robert Louis Stevenson died at the height of a fame in England which, however much it may have been intensified by the knowledge of his gallant, even gay, struggle against fatal illness, was genuine and not sentimental. He brought the frank adventure-book

back to the shelf from which, since the death of Mayne Reid, it had been pushed down by the new analytical school and reduced to the level of "books for boys," a shelf which in January of this year suffered a loss in the death of R. M. Ballantyne. Stevenson had the gift of impressing romance upon the streets and the daily life of a great modern city; and had really prepared the ground upon which *Sherlock Holmes* was at this time flourishing. It was, however, rather to his known fight with mortal disease than to intrinsic merit that his essays owed their vogue; they had the appeal of one who looks on at life. At the same time, their self-conscious grace of style commended them to a middle class still a little conceited about its newly acquired artistic appreciation. The year witnessed also the death of the greatest, though the obscurest, of the prophets of the new appreciation. Walter Pater died on 30th July. He had exercised a very great influence on many generations of Oxford youth, and there could be no clearer symptom of the general uneasiness of the *bourgeois* at the moment than the guarded tone of *The Times* in its obituary notice of him. "That his influence was always healthful," *The Times* remarked,[1] "we do not pretend to say." A school of thought which had but recently enunciated the proposition that a colour-sense was more important to the development of the individual than a sense of right and wrong, and was continually enunciating propositions of a similar kind, had appeared a positive devastation to the respectable mind of the country. Pater's true relation to this school was as much misapprehended as Pusey's relation had been to what the same kind of persons had thought an earlier devastation emanating from Oxford. Just as Pusey, remote, ascetic, severe, lived in pious practices far from the extravagances of the Ritualist movement, so Pater, equally remote, equally pious and

[1] 31st July 1894.

equally stern in personal habit, looked as from a distant height upon the curious twists given to his devoutly passionate theory of an existence infinitely sensitive and responsive. Yet, inasmuch as he was associated in the popular mind with the extremes that were rampant at the moment, it was a happy thing for him that he did not live to see the year which was to follow.

CHAPTER XVII

1895: A RETURN TO SAFE GROUND

FROM the various undercurrents which were affecting the mind of the solid classes of the country, as well as from its own shortcomings, the Liberal Government now suffered. It had never been firmly seated. It possessed a Gladstonian, and not a generally Liberal, majority. It was genuinely in touch with the Home Rule movement, but very imperfectly in touch with advanced reforming feeling in Great Britain. It did real disservice by producing a throw-back in the growing readiness of the labour organisations to believe in parliamentary action. Yet at the same time it had a vague militancy which seemed to attach it to the spirit of social change and upheaval, regarded by solid minds with anxiety, and even with terror. It produced sweeping measures; its relations with the House of Lords had aspects which lent themselves to charges of promoting class hatred. Little though the Government had been able to achieve, it still aroused nervousness; and its practical powerlessness under the House of Lords was, so far from reassuring the nervous, a source of uneasiness. The launching of projects which were destined to no fulfilment seemed to threaten a dangerous exasperation of Radicals and Socialists. The Socialists and Radicals, on their side, irritated by the existence in office of a party which, concentrating its idealism in Mr Gladstone, had perforce shared his limitations, spoke louder and louder in the effort to gain a hearing for the new demands, an understanding of the new forces.

Mr Gladstone had never distinguished them from the Liberalism which he was accustomed to find at his command.

One man who could recognise these things was Lord Randolph Churchill. If his career had developed to the full, the democratic feeling which reached its triumph in 1906 might have been earlier in the field. The damage done to his career by the presence of new men on his side after the Home Rule split was not solely, or even principally, due to the fact that one of them was Mr Goschen. It was much more due to the fact that one of them was Mr Chamberlain. He brought into the alliance of Conservatives and Unionists a kind of democratic feeling which "blanketed" the much more real feeling of Lord Randolph Churchill. Mr Chamberlain's Radicalism was of that middle-class kind which, disturbing enough in 1880 to a party of landlords, had become by 1888 almost Conservative in its distinction from the newly grown popular demands. It was taken, so to speak, as a homœopathic dose against Lord Randolph Churchill. He, more true to his class than his fellows were, maintained the old spirit of dislike of the manufacturers. The changes of ten years had brought the landlord and the manufacturer together behind his back. The aristocracy was in trade. Scions of great houses acting as touts for business firms provided material for *Punch* to satirise; but the more profound truth was that the vast extension of the limited liability principle in trading, advertised as it had been by Stock Exchange booms, had brought the aristocracy as well as the professional classes, and the upper middle classes generally, into one large new division of the population—the "absentee employer" class. Savings and surplus income went no longer into Government securities; they went into industrial and trading stocks; and thus the labour question was no longer one between workmen and a distinct class of masters of industry, but

between trade unions and the whole conglomerate mass of investors, who were in effect absentee employers. Hence Mr Chamberlain's idea of what was democratic had become, since it was a manufacturer's idea, the kind of sop which the propertied public could endure to see administered; while Lord Randolph Churchill's sense of a duty to the workman belonged to the old landlord spirit. Lord Randolph Churchill might have recovered his ground; but in the very years in which his rival was advancing his health gave way. A certain wildness crept into his too unrelated appearances in public, and no one would believe that he had outgrown the slashing days of the Fourth Party. For some time now he had ceased to be a force in political life, and on 24th January in this year he died.

Parliament met dejectedly, with a taste of stale gunpowder on its tongue. During the winter, members of the Government had tried to rouse some feeling in the country against the House of Lords; but no explosion had followed, and the result was that when the Government was accused of staying in office for the sake of office, knowing that the country was not with it, its followers had little choice but to accept this dispiriting view. The Government's weakness increased the appearance of foolhardy violence in proposals that came before Parliament. A London Valuation and Assessment Bill, presented by the London County Council, altering the whole law of assessment in order to provide a common basis for imperial and local taxation, fell inevitably under the ban of the Speaker, on the ground that such a drastic change was not proper matter for a private Bill. It was a belated offspring of certain ideas embodied in the Newcastle programme[1]; and so was the Plural Voting Bill, introduced by the Government, providing that all elections should take place on one day, and that no man

[1] See p. 300.

should vote in more than one constituency. A private member's Bill to put an end to nomination, by the Lord Lieutenant to the Lord Chancellor, of persons for appointment as Justices of the Peace was another drastic proposal. It arose out of a controversy which had raged somewhat hotly in 1893, the Tories accusing the Liberal Lord Chancellor of flagrant party spirit in such appointments (he was said in April 1893 to have appointed four hundred and thirty-three borough magistrates, of whom four hundred and one were Home Rulers), and the Liberals had replied by complaining that, even so, it was impossible to give their side a fair proportion on the Bench. This was, however, hardly a fit matter for a weak Liberal party to handle by legislation. The Local Veto Bill still hung in the air, as did the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. A Factory Bill, the chief object of which was more stringent inspection of factories employing women, and stricter regulation of their hours, brought upon itself criticism from two directions. Women Suffragists attacked it as likely to diminish the employment of women; and the Irish party attacked it because by including laundries [1] it necessitated inspection of convent laundries; this in the end caused the Bill to be dropped. This job lot of Bills was accompanied by a similar job lot of debates. Unemployment had recurred with some severity, especially in the building trade and in agriculture. The new spread of education was causing inquiries about the system of appointments in the Civil Service, which still depended upon nomination, and there was a debate on this subject. A motion to keep out foreign prison-made goods, a tentative scheme by the London County Council for beginning the purchase of the Water Companies' undertakings in London, an attempt made by the Lancashire members to have continuous High Court sittings in

[1] A disastrous fire at a laundry in January had brought out the fact that laundries were not under the Factory Acts.

Lancashire—all these took their turn and disappeared. The last mentioned was a project not without considerable support at this period. In 1892 there was a weighty body of opinion in favour of a sweeping decentralisation of High Court administration; not only Manchester, but Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield and Leeds might, it was thought, be given permanent sittings of High Court judges. Another legal proposal in 1895 was for the appointment of a Public Trustee. There had been some serious defalcations by solicitors, and five at once were struck off the rolls in March. Both the Liberal Lord Chancellor of the time and the Conservative Lord Chancellor of the last Government were in favour of the appointment of a Public Trustee. Two subjects which had a hold on the general mind took no shape in Parliament. One was elementary education, which was becoming a very controversial matter between Voluntary and Board schools; and the other was old age pensions. The committee on the latter[1] reported in April; the report was a complex production, including a majority and a minority report, and a great number of individual memoranda. The minority, headed by Mr Chamberlain, wished to recommend a contributory system of old age pensions; the majority contented themselves with making little more than a statement of the problem of the aged poor, and recommending certain changes in the method of administering out-relief.

The feebleness of the House of Commons, the public knowledge of the Government's futility, were not the only reasons for the complete lack of interest in parliamentary proceedings. Two affairs, each in its different way serious enough, were distracting people's minds. In April the world of solid respectable citizenship, which had for years suffered in baffled rage the scorn and the airy superiority of the æsthete and the artist, came to a

[1] See p. 320.

grim, and for the time startling, revenge. Mr Oscar Wilde, at the conclusion of an action for criminal libel which he brought against Lord Queensberry, and lost, was arrested on charges which the plain man took as ample confirmation of the plain man's position—that no one can make a jest of morality and respectability without some flaw in his own morals. The case against Mr Wilde was, of course, no real indictment of æstheticism, but it was the end of the æsthete as he had been felt for fifteen years in social life. It was also lamentably the end of a very brilliant writer. At the moment of Mr Wilde's arrest two comedies by him were being played simultaneously in London, and one of them, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, had revealed in him a genius not only for clothing his comedies in unfailing wit, but for essentially comic construction. In his assertion of the function of criticism, and in his richly varied vocabulary, lay his chief artistic claim. In his social gifts of wit and swiftness lay his most lasting effects. The widespread modern capacity for "taking things with a light hand," the distaste for solemn attitudes and obvious statements, the easy carrying of personal attainments, which formerly had taken some generations of high breeding to produce, may be largely traced to Oscar Wilde's influence. The particular form of wit for which he was most famous, the paradoxical epigram, was not exclusively his; Whistler was even more brilliant at producing it. But its combination with genuinely social gifts, which Whistler had not, makes Wilde's career the more interesting. He bore a large part in a readjustment of values in life which survived his own fall. The crash of the fall certainly affected the whole spirit of this year. There were few great houses in London where he was not known; fewer still where there was not among the younger generation an aggressive, irresponsible intolerance which had some relation, however vague, to his brilliant figure. Even

athleticism rejoiced at this date to dissociate itself from anything that might have been in danger of easy approval from an older generation, by being also æsthetic; captains of university football teams had been seen with long hair. There was too much of real revolt in the movement to allow the fate of one man to hold it lastingly in check; but a certain silence, almost, if not quite, shamefaced, settled for the moment on much of the social life of the country, and this had its part in the obvious impulse, when the General Election came, to return to safe "English" ground in every possible direction.

The other affair, which took much attention, especially as the year drew on, was a heavy slump in South African stocks and shares. The immense fortunes which had been made in that country had rather upset London. The diamond magnate and the gold magnate were building palaces for themselves in the West End, and setting, so to speak, a financial pace which took London's breath away. Speculation increased enormously. Society rushed to the new form of gambling; women who had never seen "the City" went off in hansoms after breakfast to consult their brokers; gilded youths in clubs of an afternoon turned the evening papers at once to the list of Stock Exchange quotations. Rich men with no other passport into society were asked to dinner on the chance that they might have good speculative tips to give. What had caused a more acute run on South African ventures was the shadiness at the moment of industrial stocks. The misguided energies of the company promoter were referred to in a recent chapter.[1] The report of the Committee on Company Law, which was published in August of this year, showed that the limited liability capital in Great Britain in 1894 was no less than £1,035,029,835, while in France similar capital was only about £400,000,000, and in Germany £300,000,000. This

[1] See p. 358.

comparison caused the committee to decide that it must be careful not to disturb unnecessarily the employment of wealth, and to remember that prudence and business-like use of wealth could not be inculcated by law. It therefore declined to recommend any of the drastic provisions which had been suggested as to double registration, or a compulsory reserve liability, and confined itself to recommendations as to disclosure of the vendor's name and his price, and as to statutory meetings. But indeed recent events in the industrial market, and some severe writing down of capital, were enough to produce prudence for the moment in that market. The consequent rush to the South African stocks was followed by a serious slump, and what was nearly a panic on the Stock Exchange. The situation was saved by the intervention of some of the magnates, notably Mr Barnato, who stepped in, and bought freely, just in time to prevent a finally disastrous sagging of prices. There was nothing wrong with the gold industry itself. On the contrary, everything pointed to the Rand mines being far more valuable than anyone had at first supposed. A report made in 1893 had placed the value of the reefs at £315,000,000, which meant that all difficulties from shortage of gold supply, and the prospect of a complete revaluation of the world's currency, were removed for at least a generation or two. The gold output of the Rand in 1895 was between 150,000 and 200,000 oz. a month. The slump therefore was not due to any failure or overestimation of the wealth of the gold mines. It turned out, before the year was past, to be the beginning of trouble of a more threatening kind.

Parliament pursued its uninteresting way until the third week in June. It passed with reluctance a vote of £80,000 for a new Colonial possession, Uganda, which the British East Africa Company had left, like a foundling, on the doorstep of the Government. The Government

had also recovered its reputation in the matter of Jabez Balfour, the absconding head of the Liberator Society.[1] After two years of the most ingenious proceedings he had at length been extradited by the Argentine Government, and was landed in England and brought up at Bow Street early in May. From time to time since the beginning of 1893 reports had reached home that his extradition was granted; each time an appeal had followed, and all sorts of delays had spun out the proceedings. The last ingenuity had been the discovery that in the province of Argentina, where he was living, there was a law that a plaintiff with a monetary claim against any person possessed the right to prevent that person from leaving the province; after the decision of the Supreme Court at Buenos Ayres confirming the extradition order, a plaintiff had lodged such a claim against Jabez Balfour. The matter came to debate in the House of Commons in March 1895, and the Government had some uncomfortable moments attempting to defend its having allowed the man to leave the country some months after the Liberator Society suspended payment. But, after all, the last defence against extradition was a weak one; payment of the claim broke it down at once, and the fugitive was brought to justice. He was sentenced in November to fourteen years' penal servitude; but the case turned on such intricacies of financial operations, and the disaster to the poorer public, now largely repaired by the Relief Fund, was so far past, that the final stages of the case excited little interest. However, if the Government had failed to bring him to justice, there would have been interest enough to turn votes. There were not many places in England which had not some instance of the effects of the Liberator disaster.

The Government took the first possible exit from its position. The Army Estimates of the year were interest-

[1] See page 326.

ing, because at last the abolition of the post of Commander-in-Chief, which many reformers had desired for years, was in sight. A commission over which the Duke of Devonshire, then still Lord Hartington, had presided in 1888, had reported in 1890 in favour of the abolition of the post. But the difficulty in the way of carrying out the report was that the Commander-in-Chief was the Duke of Cambridge, and his royal blood, his venerable but vigorous old age, and his undoubted services and devotion to the army, made the task peculiarly delicate. It had at last been managed, and the statement on the Army Estimates of the year announced the fact. But no one imagined the estimates to be so important that the Government would go out on them. A division on the supply of cordite in reserve was carried against the Government by 132 to 125, and they resigned. The Welsh Disestablishment Bill, which was in committee at the time, expired. Lord Salisbury took office, and formed the first Government in which Liberal Unionists and Conservatives coalesced. There was still lack of cordiality on the Conservative side. Mr Chamberlain had cast a vote for Welsh Disestablishment which rankled in Tory minds, and there was some criticism of the number of posts which had gone in the new Government to Unionists. A more acute criticism, which might have been recalled ten years later, was made by Sir Henry Howorth, who pleaded for fusion and not coalition on the ground that the existence of separate organisations would leave open a gulf which might widen.[1] In view of the important part played in the Tariff Reform agitation by the existence of separate electoral organisations for Conservatives and Unionists, this plea appears singularly prescient. But in 1895 all that was required seemed to be provided by Mr Chamberlain's announcement that he would not in the new Parliament issue separate whips to his supporters.

[1] Letter to *The Times*, 27th June 1895.

The election was a disastrous one for the Liberals. At its outset the chief line of attack upon them was the revolutionary nature of their proposals; and in spite of the fact that in no one of the most frequently quoted instances had they achieved any success, Home Rule, Welsh Disestablishment, Local Veto, and the abolition of the House of Lords made a sufficiently alarming list for platform purposes. Early in the contest Mr Morley was defeated at Newcastle and Sir William Harcourt at Derby; Home Rule and Local Veto were the easily assigned causes in the respective cases. The Independent Labour Party sustained blow after blow; Mr Keir Hardie was beaten, and so were Mr Hyndman and Dr Pankhurst, and in fact almost all their candidates. Mr John Burns just managed to retain his seat. By the end of July the new Parliament was complete, with 411 Conservatives and Liberal Unionists, and only 259 Liberals and Irish Nationalists—a majority of 152. The Liberal Unionist forces had risen again, and stood at 71.

The fall of the Independent Labour party was curious. Trade Unionism certainly showed no weakening. One of its most far-reaching demands—that of the eight-hours day—had been strengthened by the results of practical experiments made by two great firms, Mather & Platt in the engineering trade, and Brunner, Mond & Co. in the chemical trade. The former made a year's experiment; the latter had just finished a six-years' experiment. The former reported a fractional increase in the wages bill, balanced by a saving in wear and tear, lighting, etc., a marked diminution in the percentage of lost time, and a healthier and keener body of workmen. The latter reported that the slight increase at first in the wage bill had disappeared, and that the effect on the sobriety, regularity and health of the men was excellent. The Trade Union Congress of this year showed no real slackening of the general Labour movement. The Seamen's

Union, damaged by violent and unsuccessful strikes, had dropped in membership from 80,000 to 6000, but the membership of the congress showed a decline of only 20,000. The congress passed resolutions in favour of the nationalisation of land, minerals and railways—by specifying these sources of wealth, it was distinctly reconsidering its general adherence to socialism—and of the placing of docks under municipal authority. This year, as it happened, had brought a curious tribute to the lasting success of the men in the London Dock strike. The secretary of the London Docks had written to the papers to say that casual labour there had now sunk to 2 per cent. of the whole; a new system was in operation by which notices were posted every night, giving statements of the number of men that would be wanted for work the next day. Trade Unionism had no reason in the general outlook to feel weakened. At this time even the National Union of Teachers was considering joining the congress, and though no proposal came up for discussion at its annual meeting, it was remarked that the teachers showed the true Union bent in their objection to any relaxation of the rules of entrance to the profession. The explanation of the Labour downfall at the election probably was that in the general futility of the Liberal term of office the fresh tendency towards reliance upon parliamentary action had received a check; and at the same time the erratic and unimportant tendency to violence had rendered the Labour programme liable to misrepresentation.

The organisation of women's labour was greatly forwarded in 1895 by the establishment of the National Union of Women Workers. It was not in the technical sense a trade union, and its relations to the various branches and societies affiliated to it were left very loose. But by providing a centre through which all information as to women's labour, all cases of hardship and under-

payment, all local efforts of organisation and combination, could be given a voice, it promoted enormously the interests of labouring women. Those interests had recently been officially recognised by the appointment of a woman, Miss Collet, among the labour correspondents of the Board of Trade. A report by her, published in this year, showed that, contrary to the general opinion, employment of women in industry had not very largely increased. In the census of 1881, 34·05 per cent. of girls and women over ten years of age were returned as occupied; in that of 1891 the figures were 34·42 per cent. The number of domestic servants had actually decreased; and in clerkships the numbers of women employed had not advanced nearly so fast as the numbers of men.

The death of Professor Huxley occurred at the end of June. The controversies with which his name had become most commonly associated had ended some time before. Already people had begun to see that the evolutionary theory had its place in the intellectual world, but need not drive out other philosophies. In its early days the theory was a sort of fetish. It had been just sufficiently within the understanding of the ordinary mind to be misused. Advanced as an hypothesis, it had been taken by minds unaccustomed to the scientific uses of hypothesis as almost a statement of fact. An age still ringing with ecclesiastical and theological controversies seized the new weapons; and men "who were trying to explain why the giraffe's neck grew long, found themselves called upon to say how heaven and earth came out of chaos."[1] What is astonishing to a later generation is not only the eagerness with which the theory was used, but the universal attention which was paid to the religious controversy. Its later manifestations—the battle between Professor Huxley and Dr Wace in the pages of *The Nineteenth Century*, for instance—had perhaps shown

[1] *The Times*, 1st July 1895.

signs of the shrinking of interest; and by the time of Huxley's death such engagements would only have appealed to a very restricted public.

In the summer, rather too late to be fully lionised, a man came to London bringing with him an even more adventurous atmosphere than that which had surrounded Stanley five years before. He was Slatin Pasha, an Austrian, who had been governor of the Soudanese province of Darfur at the time of the Mahdist rising. Taken prisoner by the Mahdi, he had spent eight months in chains, and after that, eleven years always in the circle of the Khalifa's bodyguard at Omdurman, the city which the Khalifa had established for himself on the opposite bank of the Nile from Khartoum. Slatin Pasha had escaped at last, and his worn figure, bearing the signs of his captivity, was the first breaking of the silence which since 1885 had encompassed the Soudan. Here was a man who could tell the world the conditions of the Khalifa's rule, who could give information as to its extent, the provinces he yet held, and those, like Darfur and Bahr-el-Ghazal, which he had abandoned. To England generally Slatin was a personage of romance. To the Government at home and the authorities in Egypt he was much more; and the idea of the reconquest of the Soudan took a new vitality For the present, however, the finances of Egypt seemed to be engaged. The growing prosperity of the country had made practicable the idea of a large scheme of irrigation, involving the construction of a great barrage at Assouan; this was given the preference over military operations, and it was announced that there was no immediate prospect of the British Government consenting to a Soudan expedition.

This summer witnessed a renewal of that rivalry between the great railway lines to the North which had been an excitement in 1888.[1] This year the goal was

[1] See p. 235.

Aberdeen, instead of Edinburgh, and by 29th July (the racing began on 1st July) the West Coast time for the journey was ten hours and five minutes, and the East Coast time ten hours and twenty-three minutes. The normal time hitherto had been on the West Coast route eleven hours, fifty minutes, and on the East Coast route eleven hours, thirty-five minutes. For two months the contest went on, until by the end of August the West Coast had actually cut its time down to eight hours, thirty-two minutes, or little more than the best record for the run to Edinburgh in the earlier race. This meant an average speed over the whole 540 miles of 63 miles an hour, and a maximum speed of 74 miles an hour was attained at some points. The best maximum of the East Coast was 66·7 miles an hour. The race, of course, had little relation to ordinary railway work; it involved cleared lines, and a dislocation of the usual traffic which could not long be tolerated. But it was a glorious affair for the onlooker, and it left behind it some acceleration of journeying in the normal time-table. The speed was the more notable in that by this time dining cars and corridor coaches, with all their extra weight, were in general use on the large Northern lines.

It is no insignificant proof of the change of feeling in 1895 that *Trilby* took the country by storm. Its author, George du Maurier, used to express his bewilderment at the vogue of the book; and one who had been occupied, as he had been for thirty years, in representing week by week for the pages of *Punch* the passing foibles of the English, may well have been astonished. What was there, he might ask himself, in his gentle story to charm a world which, when not sophisticated, was still strict, even a little prim, in its outlook, and when not rich enough to be absorbed in money, was chiefly absorbed in athletics? The main part of the secret was, no doubt, that the story was genuinely charming; but some of its success may

also have been due to the time of its publication. On the one hand, reaction against languid cleverness made people ready to enjoy the youthful romance of du Maurier's book. On the other hand, the relaxing of conventions, the altered ideas of what was genuinely immoral, the saner judgments, the greater personal freedom which, with all its faults, the æsthetic movement had helped to bring about, had the effect of giving entrance to the book in a thousand homes where ten years earlier it would not have been accepted. In this latter respect *Trilby* is, however, only one sign (though perhaps the most striking one) of a change of thought. In the other respect, that of its reception by the sophisticated world, it falls little short of a historical event. People who had made so complete a surrender to a book entirely devoid of pose or perverseness could hardly return to the old superior attitudes. *Trilby* did, in fact, break down a kind of angularity which æstheticism had been producing, and people became less afraid of acknowledging that they liked a book or a picture or a poem for no particular reason. Both as a book and in dramatic form at the Haymarket Theatre, *Trilby* was one of the great events of the year. It was in general a time of somewhat mild flavours in literature. A year or two earlier J. M. Barrie's *Auld Licht Idylls* had set a fashion, of which other Scottish writers were quick to take advantage. The sentimental air of the "kail-yard school" blew over the libraries. That school and Miss Marie Corelli divided at this period the affections of the great middle class. Equally sentimental was the taste of the moment for coon songs. Miss May Yohe, at the summit of her fame, was singing haunting melodies in a patch of limelight on the stage of musical comedy; and "Honey, my Honey," and "Linger Longer Loo" were running in the heads of most young men, and not a few young women.

The high-water mark of the passion for cycling was

surely reached in this year, when permission was given for cyclists to ride in Hyde Park, though during the season they were confined to the hours before ten o'clock in the morning and after seven o'clock in the evening. Since the old high bicycle had disappeared, and the new type of cycle had made the pastime possible for women to indulge in, the slightly ridiculous figure cut by the cyclist had ceased to exist. The pneumatic tyre and a better knowledge of gearing made the machine easy and comfortable to ride; and as motor cars were not yet in use it was also the most rapid means of road-travelling. Doctors took advantage of the craze in order to make people take exercise. The result was that, in this year and the next, cycling was not only the great Saturday afternoon amusement of the worker, and the new resource of people living in the country, but was also the fashion in town. Mayfair abandoned its morning canter for a few turns round the Park on a bicycle, and even went so far afield as to Battersea Park, where the restriction of hours did not exist; breakfasts in Battersea Park became the new adventure. Meanwhile cycling had equally captured the athlete, and long-distance races and twenty-four-hour races were frequent.

The new Government settled itself quietly into place. Mr Chamberlain, for whom rumour had proposed various posts, including that of Secretary for War, had taken, somewhat to the surprise of the country, the Colonial Office, not hitherto a department in which reputations were made. It was not long before he caused it to be known that appointments under the Colonial Office were no longer going to be at the easy disposal of patronage [1]; and a more compact co-operation between the different portions of the Empire was aimed at in his circular despatch to all colonial governments, asking for discussion of the possibility of increasing their trade with

[1] *The Times*, 12th November 1895.

the mother country. No tariff suggestion was made; the desire expressed was rather for more knowledge at home of the needs of colonial traders and of the demands which home manufacturers might be expected to meet. For the rest the Government's policy, as announced to the meeting of the National Union of Conservative Associations, was firstly to set the supremacy of the British navy beyond question, and secondly to alter the rating system, so as to give some relief to agricultural interests. The third place was allotted to educational proposals; but it was quite clear that this subject was going to be pressed forward from various directions with a vigour which would be ill satisfied with a third place. Early in the year a committee appointed by the two Archbishops to inquire into the condition of the voluntary schools had reported upon the increasing difficulty of meeting the demands of the education authorities in the matter of school accommodation, and efficiency of the teaching staff, out of voluntarily subscribed funds. As assistance from the rates would necessarily carry with it some form of public control of the schools, the committee agreed that the Church should rather ask aid from the Imperial Government, in the form of a general maintenance grant. Incidentally the committee remarked that the pressure on elementary schools was growing, because the curriculum was now so good that many parents, who could afford to send their children elsewhere, were content with an elementary school. Lord Salisbury had taken an early opportunity of ranging himself on the side of the Voluntary schools, expressing the belief that they would outlast the Board schools [1]; and the natural result was that, when he returned to power, the Church school authorities were ready to ply him with suggestions. Already the situation was so acute that on the clerical side the common way of regarding the School Board

[1] *The Times*, 22nd March 1895.

system was to speak of it as competition with Church schools, and to think of it as unfair competition.[1] The report of the Commission on Secondary Education somewhat turned attention from this particular question, because it proved to be a very sweeping document. It recommended the appointment of a Secretary of State for Education, so as to give the work the full status of a Cabinet office; the setting-up of new local authorities, to be drawn partly from the county and borough councils, and partly by co-optation from experts outside those bodies; and the endowing of these authorities with power to impose a twopenny rate for secondary, as well as purely technical, education, and power also to administer funds for building and equipping schools. It was the report of a commission appointed by a Liberal Government; but the Duke of Devonshire had taken the office of Lord President of the Council in the new Government, which made him responsible for national education; and he had long ago accepted a liberal view of what education should mean.

During the autumn the solid citizen had more than one occasion to be thankful that he had restored to power a solid Government. In October a labour dispute broke out which seemed likely to rival in severity the greatest strikes of recent years. It began with a demand among the Clyde shipbuilding hands for an advance in wages. There had been a reduction during recent bad times, and, as the yards were now busy again, the men asked for an advance of two shillings a week. The masters admitted that business was better, but maintained that, as they were still carrying out contracts at the low prices of the bad times, they could not afford the advance. The Clyde men did not immediately proceed to a strike, but the Belfast men, who had joined in the demand, did so. Thereupon the Clyde masters, no doubt convinced that the strike was bound to spread, took the aggressive,

[1] *The Times*, 21st November 1895.

and locked their men out in the third week in October. For the remainder of the year the struggle continued, but in the closing days of December a settlement appeared in sight. At a conference in Glasgow the masters offered an advance of one shilling a week to commence in February, and stipulated that these terms should be unchallenged by the men for six months after that date. Although the men asked for the advance in January, and were disinclined to bind themselves for more than four months, the struggle seemed unlikely to continue.

A short passage of strained relations with Belgium in October was less important for its cause than for its sequel. An Englishman named Stokes, engaged in trading in the Congo Free State, had been executed by a Belgian official, Captain Lothaire. The accusation made against Mr Stokes was of some evil-doing in his commerce with the natives; the gravamen of the British complaint was that, instead of allowing the accused man to exercise his undoubted right of appeal to the tribunals of the Congo State, Captain Lothaire had hanged him out of hand. The British Government insisted that, besides payment to the dead man's family of an indemnity of 150,000 francs, reparation should include the bringing of Captain Lothaire to trial. But what the incident really brought upon the King of the Belgians was a sudden sharpening of suspicion as to the whole administration of the Congo territory. Hitherto there had been only a vague idea that the administration was not prosperous; but the Stokes incident opened the way for those who knew something of the actual nature of that administration. As yet the atrocities of the rubber trade seem to have been unknown; but various articles published during this controversy with the Belgian authorities expressed grave distrust of the methods of the ivory trade. It was the beginning of the long task of letting light into a very dark place.

Next, with some suddenness, a sharp tone began to appear in reference to the Transvaal. This was the more serious effect of the slump in gold-mining shares, which had caused such nervousness in England. As long as all went well at home, little attention was paid to the complaints of the settlers in the Transvaal. But now, remarkably coincident with the accession to power of the Conservative Government, came a change of tone. The Boers were reminded that complaints of insufficient police protection, of total neglect of educational facilities, and of general disregard of the interests of the Rand, could not properly be set aside, when they proceeded from an industry which provided nine-tenths of the revenues of the State, and had, moreover, transformed that State from a bankrupt community to a prosperous and thriving one. A disposition in France to regard the agitation of the Uitlanders' grievances as a preliminary to the usual British acquisition of territory added fuel to the fire; and before the year ended, the situation was growing tense.

But even more suddenly a situation had arisen in quite another quarter which far outweighed this in gravity. A comparatively insignificant dispute with Venezuela, as to the boundary line between that country and British Guiana, was magnified into a threat of disastrous war by a wholly unexpected pronouncement from President Cleveland, to the effect that the United States claimed the right to a predominant voice in any territorial dispute on the American continent. "The Monroe Doctrine," on which the President's Message to Congress was based, was thus introduced to an astonished and angry England. The doctrine had been formulated by President Monroe in 1823 for the protection of the young South American republics against intervention, which at that time seemed probable, by Roman Catholic powers in Europe. That it should be thrust forward in the Venezuelan controversy

amazed England; and it was unfortunate, if absurd in a connection of such gravity, that two sporting events of this year had caused bad blood between Englishmen and Americans. At Henley Regatta, in July, an eight from Cornell University had been drawn against an eight of the Leander Club. There was a high wind on the day of the race, and, when the starter asked the crews if they were ready, he failed to hear from the Leander boat the reply that they were not ready. He started the race, and the Cornell boat went off alone. This roused a furious discussion, and the Cornell crew were roundly accused of unsportsmanlike conduct in not waiting for their rivals, when they saw them not ready for the start. In September Lord Dunraven sent over another yacht to challenge for the America Cup. He protested strongly against having to start the race amid a crowd of excursion steamers, which made the sailing of a racing yacht not only difficult, but risky; and as no notice was taken of his protest he contented himself, when the third race came on, with formally crossing the starting line, and then turning his yacht immediately back. Of course such incidents as these were as much indications of existing bad feeling as causes of new irritation; but the danger of them, when the Venezuela difficulty arose, was that they had made popular a sense of rancour and hostility. Lord Salisbury had given himself no sinecure when he returned, in his new Government, to the control of the Foreign Office. His presence there prevented any of that inflammation of public opinion which might easily at this juncture have forced the diplomatic situation. Lord Salisbury contented himself with the knowledge that the approach of a presidential election in the United States might account for a good deal; and set himself to producing a way of escape for President Cleveland from a situation which had probably become rather more serious than he had intended it should be.

CHAPTER XVIII

1896: THE JAMESON RAID, AND MOTOR CARS

NEW YEAR'S DAY brought most astonishing news. On 29th December a body of troops of the British South Africa Company, under the command of Dr Jameson, the Administrator of Mashonaland, had crossed the frontier of the Transvaal, on the way to give armed support to the residents in Johannesburg, who had been, it now appeared, banding themselves together against the Boer rule. With but vague recollections of complaints of Boer tyranny, yet a lively sense that this was no new quarrel, and that there were old sores between the Boers and the English, England generally took the news with some satisfaction; it served the Boers right. A letter was published, which had been sent from Johannesburg to Dr Jameson, saying that the wives and children of Englishmen there were in danger, and armed help must be despatched. There was no hesitation in believing this, though it implied a state of things of which no knowledge had yet become public. But at once it appeared that something was wrong. Mr Chamberlain from the Colonial Office instantly repudiated Dr Jameson and his men, and he called on the British South Africa Company to do the same. The High Commissioner in Cape Colony ordered the instant return of the force. On 3rd January it was announced that Dr Jameson had received, and disregarded, these messages, had pursued his course into the Transvaal, but, while bivouacking at a little place named Krugersdorp, had been surrounded by Boer commandos, and forced to surrender after a

brief attempt at fighting. The invasion had turned into a raid.

But how had it happened at all, men asked themselves. What had produced the explosion? For certainly such hazy ideas as the ordinary Englishman had acquired of recent affairs in South Africa had not led him to suppose that blows were about to be dealt. There was not much satisfaction for the inquiring mind. It was clear that the Boers regarded the growing power of the Rand with dislike and suspicion, and their feelings led them into treating its residents intolerantly. Their attitude was dictated firstly by the belief that the English were determined to filch their country, in order to make a compact whole of British South African territory; and secondly by a confidence that they could frustrate any such schemes. Their fear led them, on every agitation of the Uitlanders' grievances, to take a stiffer attitude towards franchise demands, which they met with increasing conditions as to length of residence; and towards complaints of insufficient attention to the Rand's requirements, which they treated as so many ingenious attempts to rouse feeling in England. Their confidence led them, on any sign of British enterprise in South Africa, to strengthen every resource they possessed and to improve their armaments. Thus the progressive occupation by the British of Bechuanaland, of the coast-line of Zululand, of Mashonaland and Matabeleland, had been taken as so many threats; and the one outlet left to the Boers—that by way of the Dutch railway to Lourenço Marques—grew the more precious. The railway became a weapon in President Kruger's hands; and when the traders of Cape Colony, objecting to the freight prices charged in the Transvaal, took to convoying their goods by waggon into the country, the President closed the "drifts," or fords, of the Vaal River. A perpetual succession of expansions on the one side, and self-assertions on the other, had

produced a situation in which neither side could move without adding to the other side's preconceptions. That the situation could have arisen with so little concurrent knowledge in England was due in great part to the position occupied by Mr Cecil Rhodes. As Premier of Cape Colony he was liable to the dissemination of such knowledge of his policy as Blue Books afford. As director of the British South Africa Company he had, so to speak, an unsupervised range of action. He had a power-supply affixed to the main outside the meter.

The news of the failure of Dr Jameson's attempt was followed by an incident which embittered British feeling. On 4th January it was announced that the German Emperor had telegraphed to President Kruger, congratulating him on repelling an armed force and maintaining the independence of his country. To the most sober-minded in England this was an inflammatory encouragement to the Boers to assert a liberty of action which, however futile the provisions of the Convention of 1884 may have been, was not officially accepted by Great Britain. To less sober minds it was a provocative crow from a jealous rival in Europe. Luckily the Government was able to announce before many days had passed that President Kruger had waived his rights over Dr Jameson and his captured force, and had handed them over to Great Britain for trial. Leading members of the Uitlander community in Johannesburg were arrested, and remained in the Transvaal for trial. The British Government had not swerved an inch in its policy of repudiating the raid. Mr Rhodes was reported to have remarked lugubriously that Dr Jameson had "upset the apple-cart"; and for the moment the whole episode settled down into an armed truce.

This incident had thrown into the background the threatened quarrel with the United States; Lord Salisbury had made soothing proposals for arbitration respecting

the Venezuelan boundary; and the alarm died down so rapidly that before the year was a fortnight old there was already a suggestion that the occasion might be seized upon to draft a general arbitration treaty between the two countries. The shipbuilding strike was settled before the end of January on the terms offered by the masters at the Glasgow conference.[1] The national revenue was recovering itself so handsomely that there was good prospect of a surplus for the Budget. On the whole the new Government entered on its first session with the confidence of men who had risen not unsuccessfully to trying occasions. The Opposition on their side foresaw the old familiar weaknesses to attack—the customary Tory embroilment in complications abroad, the customary readiness to plunge into little wars (an expedition had started for Ashanti to bring to submission an unruly monarch); and as if to complete the case, there were again "Turkish atrocities" to revive the Gladstonian spirit. Massacres of Armenians were mounting to an appalling story. When Parliament met there was no lack of promise of domestic legislation. A new Irish Land Bill, an Education Bill, an Agricultural Rating Bill, and measures dealing with light railways, with friendly societies, with company law, and with Irish education were in the Government's list. But if the Ministry had had nothing but domestic legislation to handle they would have had a singularly comfortless time; and to that extent the instincts of the Opposition were just. In affairs abroad lay the Government's main interest. The first work of the new Parliament was one more piece of tinkering with its own procedure. Mr Balfour proposed new rules for regulating Committee of Supply. This was the part of a Government's work which had offered the best target in the days of organised obstruction, because it could not be dropped, as any other piece of business might be. The worst effect of this was that supply had lost its

[1] See p. 381.

importance; criticism of estimates had become, not a member's duty, but a suspect proceeding. Mr Balfour set up a time-limit, with no pretence of applying it in cases of urgency or obstruction, but as a normal method. Certain days were allotted for supply, and on the nineteenth day money votes not yet passed were to be closured, and on the twentieth day the report stage was to be taken under closure.

Before the end of February the principal offenders in the Jameson Raid were in England, and were brought up at Bow Street. These were Dr Jameson, Sir John Willoughby, and eleven others. The authorities, pursuing still their policy of repudiation, took pains to prevent anything like public demonstrations on the prisoners' behalf. The steamer on which they came home was brought round to the Thames, and in the lower reaches they were transferred to a launch which landed them unnoticed at Waterloo Pier. Until they came into the police court there was no chance of cheering them, but then the chance was taken, in spite of severe strictures on the indecorousness of such a display of feeling. The charge brought against the prisoners was that of unlawfully fitting out a military expedition against a friendly State. Now that the first surprised feelings were over, and the momentary satisfaction of the transfer of the offenders to Great Britain had cooled, a vigorous discussion of the terms of their surrender arose—of the question whether the Johannesburgers had been induced to lay down their arms by the threat that the lives of Dr Jameson and the others depended on their doing so, whether Dr Jameson's surrender had been unconditional—and so on. It was not an important discussion except for the soreness it revealed. Mr Chamberlain, who had gained ground with even the extreme Tories by obtaining the transfer of the prisoners to British justice, had now to lose a little. He fell into the mistake of attempting a counter-stroke, and attempting it so publicly

that its failure was bound to add to the general irritation. Instead of taking clearly the position that the Raid had rendered impossible for some time any official representations of the Uitlanders' grievances, he wrote a despatch to President Kruger, recapitulating the grievances, and suggesting a plan of municipal government for Johannesburg. It was not likely that in their suspicious temper the Boers would take this as anything but one more covert sapping of their rule; and an invitation, also conveyed in the despatch, to President Kruger himself to come to England for a discussion of the position, was plainly ill-timed. Mr Chamberlain published this despatch in England before it was delivered to President Kruger, an obvious breach of official good manners. There were advisers at President Kruger's elbow clever enough to see this, if the President himself did not. The reply was not only a refusal of the invitation, and a putting aside of the suggestion, but also a rebuke. Ill-feeling had one more thing to feed upon. What really forced the feeling in every possible way was the question of the complicity of British official authorities in the Raid. Coming as it did so soon after the accession of the Conservatives and Unionists to power, representing as desperate a situation in the Transvaal which the ordinary man had never regarded as acute, the Raid seemed to throw a light, by some considered sinister, on Mr Chamberlain's choice of office in the new Ministry. He was the man about whose post there had been most speculation. He had chosen one not hitherto associated with great energy or scope for ambition; and within six months he was dealing with the matter which was practically the only subject in the public mind. Late in April it became known that certain cipher telegrams which had fallen into the Boers' hands on the capture of Dr Jameson were held by the Boers to establish the fact that Mr Rhodes and Mr Beit (a millionaire of the Rand mines) knew of the plans being made in Johannesburg for

the calling in of an armed force. If Mr Rhodes was cognisant of the plot, was the Colonial Office wholly ignorant ? And if it was, why was Mr Rhodes still Prime Minister of Cape Colony ? Such doubts had their effect on both sides. The Liberal demand was plain enough ; there must be a full and drastic inquiry. The Tory attitude could not be one of opposition to such a demand. No mistakes could be afforded, and the Colonial Office must, if possible, be absolved from complicity in such a fiasco. A few weeks later Mr Rhodes resigned his Premiership, but it was not until the end of the session that the Select Committee on British South Africa was set up. Liberals could not complain of their representation on it. It consisted of the Attorney-General (Sir Richard Webster), Mr John Bigham, Mr Sydney Buxton, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Michael Hicks Beach), Mr Alfred Cripps, Sir William Hart Dyke, Mr John Ellis, Sir William Harcourt, Mr W. L. Jackson, Mr Henry Labouchere, Mr Wharton and Mr George Wyndham. In moving the appointment of the committee Mr Chamberlain stated that his policy had been to allow time for the feelings of irritation both among British and among Boers to subside, before reviving in an inquiry the grounds of the irritation. He had not succeeded, for while the Boers put the worst possible construction on the delay, the British in South Africa were becoming convinced that it was the intention of the Transvaal to push home its strong position by declaring entire independence. Meanwhile the sentences on the prisoners on either side were an indication of the feelings aroused. Dr Jameson and the twelve others in England were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment. Indeed, it seemed to be likely that the jury would return a verdict of acquittal, but the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Russell of Killowen, summed up in such a way as to leave the jury virtually no alternative. Colonel Frank Rhodes (a

brother of Mr Rhodes), Mr Phillips, Mr Farrer and Mr Hammond, the leaders of the Johannesburg Uitlanders who were tried in the Transvaal, were condemned to death, the sentences being commuted immediately afterwards to heavy fines and two years' imprisonment.

However, if Mr Chamberlain meant that his policy was to wait until merely popular feeling in England died down, he was justified. The newspaper sensation barely lasted into the early summer. Trade was reviving strongly, and the quantity of money seeking investment was reflected in the price of securities. Consols were up to 113, and all gilt-edged securities were high with them. This was, of course, partly due to the suspicion under which company-promoting had fallen. The "guinea-pig" director had been flagrantly in evidence for some years past. The Government introduced a Companies Bill, which went further than the recommendations of the recent Committee on Company Law; it insisted on the filing of balance-sheets for public inspection, and on a shareholding qualification for directors. This may have restored confidence to some extent; but the search for investments would in any case have revived speculation. Speculation had also become, in the recent gold-mines boom, an amusement and a possibility of profit, which people of leisure would not easily drop. New material for it was at hand. Gas, after all the fears expressed in the early days of electric light, had held its ground as an illuminant, and was now even gaining ground by the recent invention of the incandescent mantle. Litigation in 1896 with regard to certain patents brought the invention into prominence, so that it caught the eye of the speculator. But a still more profitable field was opening. The immense craze for cycling was swamping the manufacturers with orders, and capital for developing their capacities might well be called for. The opportunity was seized, and during this year and the following year cycle companies were a safe draw for money;

reconstructions of existing companies with very large increases of capital were of weekly occurrence; every component part of a cycle seemed to offer a fresh opportunity for the flotation of a company to make it. Capital to the amount of something like eleven millions went into cycling in 1896 alone; the Dunlop Pneumatic Tyre Company took five millions. It was the new boom. No one at the time thought of it as rather too late in the day to be a safe one, though a warning might have been derived from a paper read by Sir Douglas Fox before the British Association this year, in which he spoke of motor cars as offering an opening for engineering skill and invention even more important than that offered by cycle-construction. As yet these cars were only known to the general public as an invention developed chiefly in France but not to be taken very seriously. They were thought a noisy method of locomotion, uncertain in control, somewhat ridiculous in appearance, and terrifying to horses.

At the moment other scientific inventions were more in the public eye. The theory of mechanical flight was already liberating itself from the old belief that a lifting agent, such as light gas, was an essential for passage through the air. Mr Hiram Maxim was making experiments with lifting-planes actuated by a light engine; and Lilienthal and Pilcher were in the midst of their experiments in gliding. The work of Professor Langley, who had since 1887 been investigating the behaviour of plane surfaces subjected to resistance of the air, and had published elaborate tables of mathematical calculations, was greatly assisting such experiments. But the discovery most seized upon by popular interest was that of the Röntgen rays. It needed no scientific knowledge to see that this opened a new world of possibilities, and was a fundamental disturbance of ordinary conceptions of matter.

Parliament came early to the discovery that its long and energetic programme was meeting with a rather un-

expected check. It had attacked a fine variety of subjects. Some Bills have already been mentioned. Besides these there was a Light Railways Bill, setting up a body of commissioners for the consideration of local projects, and authorising the Treasury to make loans, provided that not less than half the capital required was subscribed by the public, and that not more than a half of that was found by local authorities. There had been a good deal of discussion of light railways during 1894, the chief idea being that they would assist agriculturists to supply markets beyond their immediate neighbourhood; and the setting up of special commissioners was intended to overcome the objection that parliamentary costs were too high, and parliamentary requirements as to construction too severe, for such transport. The Bill was, with the Agricultural Rating Bill, an attempt to cure rural distresses, which not only damaged the country districts, but also added to urban problems, by causing rural labourers to invade the towns and augment the congestion and unemployment there. The rating proposal was that agricultural land should be assessed at one-half its value, the deficiency being made up by a grant from the Imperial Exchequer to the Local Taxation Account. It brought a fresh complication into the already confused system of rating, and was a piece of specialised legislation not easy to defend. The Irish Land Bill, again, had no easy progress. A large part of it was occupied with a statutory fixing of rents (rendered necessary by the passage of time since the Act of 1881, which only fixed rents for fifteen years), and this was a repetition of proposals of which the Conservatives had complained strongly, and which the House of Lords had rejected, in Mr Morley's Bill of 1895. Tories could hardly like such a position; and they liked no better the proposals for Land Purchase, designed to facilitate and quicken the working of the Act of 1891, which had so far been largely a failure. Between the desire to have the Nationalists on the side of

the Bill (as an effective answer to Home Rulers) and the pressure of Irish landlords against conciliation of the tenants, the Bill had stormy hours to weather. The House of Lords introduced some strong amendments, but ultimately surrendered to the House of Commons' refusal to accept them, and the Bill became law.

In these rather strained conditions of Irish affairs, it was inevitable that the report of the Royal Commission on Financial Relations between Great Britain and Ireland should fall flat. It was published in September, the chairman, Mr Childers, not living to see the publication. He had died in January. The commission was of Liberal appointment,[1] and though the result might rather be described as several reports than as one, there were some points on which a majority of the commissioners were agreed, as, for instance, that the two countries must be regarded for financial purposes as separate entities, that the burden of taxation imposed by the Act of Union was too great, and that in such a period as that from 1853 to 1860 an unjustifiable weight of taxation had been placed upon Ireland.[2]

But to return to the session. Neither Agricultural Rating nor Irish Land proved so difficult a subject as the Education Bill. Proceeding largely on the lines of the recent commission's recommendations, the Bill set up the county and borough councils as the education authority, to work through special committees. Under the general supervision of the Board of Education the new authorities were to have charge of the inspection of schools, and entire control of the parliamentary grant; to develop technical schools, and take over all local duties under the Technical Instruction Act. Then came another piece of specialised legislation. The voluntary schools were to receive an

[1] See p. 356.

[2] For an interesting comment by Mr Gladstone on this point see Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, i. 646.

additional Exchequer grant of four shillings per child; and it was also provided that in any elementary school, if "a reasonable number" of parents applied for separate religious instruction for their children, the managers must allow effect to be given to this desire. From the very start the Bill gave trouble. All the Liberal strength went into denunciation of the special favours to Church schools, and the implied destruction, by the provisions for separate religious teaching, of the Cowper-Temple agreement. The Irish party, it is true, were not with them; as a party mainly Roman Catholic, they never could take the unsectarian line in matters of education. But Liberals knew that, however widely he had parted from them in some directions, Mr Chamberlain could not be pleased with this Bill; and they shrewdly suspected that Sir John Gorst, though officially responsible for it, had no great love of it as a whole. They were therefore unwearying in the proposal of amendments; and the fact that, although few amendments commanded the support of more than a hundred and fifty members, five days were spent in committee on the first two lines of the Bill, showed the Liberal party that the Government felt their hold on the Bill to be weak. Conservative supporters outside the House were not well united on the matter; they differed as to drawing the extra grants from taxes or from rates, and more seriously as to the amount of the grant. In the end the Bill was dropped. Sir John Gorst was, more or less accidentally, prominent in another debate of this year which deserves mention. He had presided at the meeting of a limited liability company, of which he was chairman; and occasion was taken to raise the question of the propriety of Cabinet Ministers holding directorships. During the Liberal Ministry of 1892-1895 Mr Gladstone (on the advice, it is said, of Lord Rosebery) had made it a rule that members of his Cabinet should not hold directorships. But that was a rather severe ideal, since even Cabinet

Ministers could not afford wholly to abandon sources of private income; and for the present the rule was not revived by Lord Salisbury. It remains to be added that the session was not a success, and Mr Balfour was taken to task for "airiness" and "inattention to detail" in his conduct of the business of the House of Commons. There was more than a hint that, if he could not do the work successfully, it was quite possible that Mr Chamberlain could.[1] Two minor matters helped to make the Government rather less popular in the country than it had been a year earlier: Mr Walter Long, President of the Board of Agriculture, decided to make permanent, and to enforce more strictly, the regulations for the slaughter of imported cattle at the port of entry; and the muzzling of dogs was largely increased owing to serious outbreaks of rabies in Lancashire and Yorkshire.

A matter of much greater moment, though its full development was long delayed, was the appointment of a Royal Commission on the Licensing Laws. We have already seen a previous Conservative Government attempting, though vainly, to respond to a certain force of moderate opinion which was uneasy about the position of the licensed victualling trade in the community.[2] Under the Liberal Government the extreme party of abolitionists held the ground, with their policy of Local Veto. The complete defeat of that policy now left room once more for moderate opinion; and the new government, committed by the earlier attempts to taking some action, appointed a Royal Commission. Its chairman was Lord Peel, who had in the previous year resigned the Speakership of the House of Commons. The Commission was constituted on a new principle, three groups being deliberately chosen to represent the licensed trade, temperance advocates, and men of open mind. Each group consisted

[1] See the *Punch* cartoon, 4th July 1896.

[2] See pages 230 and 270.

of eight men. The most prominent and capable members of the Commission were Lord Peel and Lord Windsor among the neutrals; the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr T. P. Whittaker and Mr W. S. Caine among the temperance men; and Mr North Buxton and Mr George Younger among the representatives of the trade.

One decision the Government had taken at a time when the excitement about the Jameson Raid obscured it from the popularity it would have enjoyed. It was the decision to permit an advance up the Nile for the reoccupation of part of the Soudan. Events which brought forward the possibility of an expedition have already been mentioned.[1] The event which now caused the Government to reverse its decision of the previous autumn was the crushing defeat of Italian forces by Abyssinian troops at Adowa. In the rearrangement of territory after the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from the Soudan, Italy had acquired the district of Massowah, on the Red Sea; and her defeat seemed likely to bring the dervishes down in an attempt to occupy the whole province. The desire to assist Italy by causing a diversion of dervish forces was given by the Government as the second of the reasons for sanctioning an expedition. The first was merely stated as "the advice of the military authorities in Egypt." It is more than likely that a consideration of some weight in the giving of that advice was a French advance in the Soudan by way of Darfur, one of the provinces which the Khalifa had abandoned. The resentful surprise in England when Captain Marchand was found two years later at Fashoda, would have been less bitter if more attention had been paid in 1896 to this move on the part of France. Sir Charles Dilke who, after six years' withdrawal, had returned to the House of Commons at the election of 1892, as Member for the Forest of Dean, spoke in the House of the French advance, but no one else outside official circles appeared to

[1] See p. 375.

attach any importance to it. In Egypt itself France took the anticipated line of opposing and hampering the British decision. For the purposes of the expedition it was proposed to allot a sum of half-a-million from the Egyptian Treasury. But access to Treasury accumulations could only be granted by the authority of the International Commissioners of the Debt. A majority of four to two of commissioners agreed to the payment of the sum, but the two dissentients, the French and the Russian representatives, brought an action in the Mixed Tribunal of First Instance at Cairo, and obtained a verdict that the withholding of their consent was sufficient to prevent the payment of the sum; the verdict was upheld on appeal. The British Government, desiring nothing better, repaid at once into the Egyptian Treasury the sum of £515,000, and also advanced a further sum of £800,000 at 2¾ per cent. for the expedition. But for the Franco-Russian intervention it would have been difficult for Great Britain to undertake so thoroughly the conduct of the affair. The expedition was commanded by Sir Herbert Kitchener, who knew his ground.[1] He had been continuously with the Egyptian army for fourteen years, and since 1888 had been, first as Adjutant-General and then as Sirdar, the maker of its new qualities. Early in the expedition he laid his plans to "blood" his men with a battle. The difficulty was to make sure of a downright engagement with the dervishes, but locating them at last, at Firket, he made a masterly night march in two columns, which converged with complete success upon the enemy. The dervishes were routed with heavy loss, and the Egyptian forces were put in heart to withstand a somewhat trying summer of cholera, and of heavy storms, which damaged the railway communications. Nothing occurred to hinder Kitchener's plans, and Dongola was occupied on 23rd September.

[1] See page 133.

The summer in England was abnormally hot and dry. It was full of sporting interests, beginning with the winning of the Derby by Persimmon, the Prince of Wales's horse. It was the first time that the Prince had won the Derby, and the popularity of the event was immense. The dryness of the air favoured large scores in cricket, and a reputation was made in this year which seemed likely to rival in interest that of Dr W. G. Grace, who had achieved in 1895 the feat of reaching his hundredth century in first-class cricket. Prince Ranjitsinhji, a young Indian who was in residence at Cambridge, shared with Dr Grace in 1896 the idolisation of cricket crowds. A less pleasant incident of cricket was the heated debate aroused by the action of the Cambridge eleven during the university match of this year, in bowling deliberate "no-balls" for tactical reasons. All sorts of persons rushed into the fray of deciding whether this was, or was not, sportsmanlike. The affair itself mattered less than the revelation which it produced of the place sport was occupying in the national life. Observant philosophers attributed this to the reign of commerce and machinery. The individual, they said, withered at the counting-house and the factory, but returned to his own stature at cricket or cycling. Other philosophers discerned the new force less in the active pursuit of sports than in the looking-on of crowds. Facilities of transport, easier earnings, and an easier inclination to spend them, combined with the increasing distribution of cheap newspapers to make sporting experts of even the most sluggish members of the public.

The number of cheap newspapers had increased this year by the addition of one that was soon to become by far the most prominent of them all. *The Daily Mail* was first published in the spring of 1896. It was founded by Mr Alfred Harmsworth, who had made a large fortune out of a penny weekly paper, *Answers*. He now saw that there

was no reason whatever to suppose that only the Radical working man wanted to have a daily paper for a halfpenny. He therefore offered a Conservative newspaper for a halfpenny; and, with that reliance upon the profits of enormous sales which had made the success of the penny weekly papers he promised his readers no less adequate and no less distinguished foreign correspondence than was published by the papers which cost a penny, or even by the paper which cost threepence. They could at the same time depend on no less keen a scent for the exciting and the amusing than the existing halfpenny papers had accustomed them to expect; while a general Conservative tone would make the excitement a little more reputable. It was, as events proved, the final word in a cheap Press.

A grave result of the heat of the summer was a water famine in the East End of London. Fortunately the fears which it caused of a serious spread of disease were not realised; but the danger was no imaginary one, and the mere inconvenience of the failure of supply was great. Naturally the incident revived the question of the purchase of the water undertakings of London by the County Council. The piecemeal system had come to a serious breakdown. But the probable cost of taking over the various companies was put by some experts at no less than thirty millions, and this was a daunting sum. The County Council did deposit this year a Bill for the purpose. The companies, however, were wise enough to profit by the year's experience; and they created a new system of inter-communication between their various supplies, which rendered an acute water famine in any single district much less likely, and so removed a source of friction with the public. In the absence of such friction they knew that the municipalisation of their undertakings was but a remote possibility. Some uneasiness was arising about the state of local taxation all over the country. The general local

debt was put at over two hundred and two millions, and only fifty-six millions of this sum were in directly remunerative undertakings, such as gas and water supply. Nor was it only the amount of debt which was being criticised. The more penetrating comment was that the incidence of local taxation had never been properly worked out, and that there had been no attempt to redistribute the pressure of the swiftly growing burden. At any rate, as the London County Council, in its short career, had already amassed a debt of thirty-eight and a half millions, the London Water Companies had no great fear of compulsory purchase. The council had enough to do in defending its existing enterprises, especially the Works Department, which was accused of spending more than contractors would have asked for its undertakings, and also of choosing the jobs which would be most likely to turn out well financially, leaving the others to the contractors.

During the summer there was a murder trial which has to be mentioned for the quality rather than the extent of the public interest in it. It was the trial of a woman named Dyer for killing children put out " to nurse " with her. It drew attention to the horrors of baby-farming; and the general conscience was so much stirred that other problems of slum childhood received more attention than might otherwise have been given them. Poor Law schools fell under the strong condemnation of a committee appointed to inquire into them, and it was decided that the children should be placed under the new education authorities, as soon as these were set up. An experiment by the Chorlton Board of Guardians, in Lancashire—a " model village " for boarding-out workhouse children, consisting of sixteen cottages accommodating nearly three hundred children, with a swimming bath for their use, and workshops for teaching carpentry, bootmaking and plumbing—was started in September; and other towns,

such as Sheffield, made the same experiment in a less costly way by taking houses in different parts of the town, and placing pauper children in them. The Dyer case had for the moment made the boarding-out of children rather unpopular. The case had nothing to do with Poor Law children, but it created an uneasiness about placing children in any circumstances except those of direct public control. Early in the following year a new Poor Law Board, for superintending matters connected with pauper children, was set up as a sub-department of the Local Government Board.

When the autumn revived political interest, the Liberal party had to choose a new leader. Lord Rosebery had had enough in two years of leading a party which found him light, and which he found preposterously heavy. The course taken on his resignation showed how deep was the disintegration of the Liberal party since the retirement of Mr Gladstone had removed the bond of personal loyalty to him. At the time of his retirement the party had been in office, and the choice of its next leader, being the choice of a Prime Minister, had been the business of the Crown, and not of the party. Now that the party had to find a leader, the case was seen to be very different. After these two years it would have been impossible to propose a peer again, and so Lord Spencer missed finally the chance, which most people thought should have been his, beyond question, on Mr Gladstone's resignation. In the Commons it was practically impossible to pass over Sir William Harcourt; and yet it was only too well known that he would not command even a decently unanimous allegiance. In the end the real difficulty was shirked. Sir William Harcourt was chosen leader of the party in the House of Commons; and refuge was taken from the greater problem by the decision that the actual leader of the party as a whole need not be chosen until there was a likelihood of the Liberals coming into power. The

controversy on the Government's proposals for education showed no diminution of bitterness. A new line of criticism suggested that there should be no attempt to deal with elementary and technical education together. The latter had been well handled under existing arrangements. A report of the Technical Education Board of the London County Council, published in this year, is a useful guide to the elaborate and successful scholarship system which had grown up. The first stage was provided by six hundred scholarships allotted to elementary schools, for boys and girls under thirteen years of age, whose parents had incomes not exceeding £150. These insured free education for two years at improved secondary or upper schools, and a money payment of £20 a year. None of these scholarships went to children of middle-class parents, and 1·5 children per thousand in the London area had made this first step. The next was by intermediate scholarships for boys and girls under sixteen years of age whose parents had incomes not exceeding £450 a year. They ensured free education up to the age of nineteen at public schools, and a money payment of £20 or £30 a year. There were thirty-five of these scholarships, and only five had gone to children whose parents' incomes were over £250 a year. Lastly, there were senior scholarships, carrying free education through a university course with a payment of £60 a year. There were also a hundred exhibitions tenable at evening art schools, and over three hundred exhibitions for higher training in domestic economy. This was an example of work now being done all over the country, work which in the north especially was transforming the lives and prospects of the intelligent workmen. Curiously enough, it depressed the patient philosopher whose writings had their chief influence amongst these very people. Mr Herbert Spencer finished in this year his *Synthetic Philosophy*; and admitted himself depressed by the spread of socialist views of the functions of the State.

Yet it was his doctrine which, more than anything else, was sought after by the advanced working men; and his philosophical speculations, never much esteemed by academic teachers, had their real public in the people whose opinions he disliked. In labour matters generally the year was a quiet one. There were one or two strikes for Trade Union principles, and at the end of the year the case of Flood *v.* Jackson became famous. It was one in which certain shipwrights engaged on ironwork were discharged on the complaint of the ironworkers, and brought an action against the delegate of the Ironworkers' Union. The jury held that the latter had acted maliciously; and the case was so difficult that the House of Lords, when the appeal reached it, had to call in the aid of judges of the High Court. In the end the original verdict was reversed, and the union won the case. But there could be no mistaking the reluctance with which this decision was reached, or the growing dissatisfaction in a large part of the community with regard to the apparently privileged position of trade unions under the common law. An effort towards genuine political recognition of trade unions was made in this year by Lord James of Hereford, who introduced a Bill for the registration of conciliation boards, and to give the Board of Trade a statutory power of intervention in labour disputes. Meanwhile the co-operation movement was in some difficulty. The extension of its productive side had brought it to the problem of fluctuation of demand, and of the locking-up of capital, which was imposed by the necessity of holding goods against a recovery of the market.

The year had a heavy death-roll of notable men. It included some distinguished artists—Lord Leighton, master of graceful and delicate opulence in painting and in personality, and Sir John Millais, one of the pre-Raphaelite group, who had found his brush not incapable of command of a popular style. The

death of these two men left academic art in England singularly bare and lifeless in the face of the newer generation of painters. Another artist who died this year was George du Maurier; he had brought *Punch* into true relation with an altering social structure by giving to satire of Society tricks and fads and changes of view that prominence which Leech and Charles Keene had given entirely to middle-class foibles. In October died William Morris. His difficulty in associating himself with the labour movement of the last eight or nine years gave some colour to the criticism that his socialism was rather a sentimental form of protest against the ascendancy of the commercial spirit than a true political conviction. But the profound influence he exercised was easy to recognise; and, though his own manufactures were too costly to reach any but those of considerable means, his gospel of design had already modified the taste of even suburban furnishers. Archbishop Benson, while on a visit to Mr Gladstone at Hawarden, died suddenly in a pew in church. His one outstanding action, the trial of the Bishop of Lincoln, was an error; but he had otherwise filled his throne with dignity and grace. He was apt to be misled by picturesque possibilities, and in this year had been engaged in the rather unwise movement to try to obtain from the Vatican a recognition of Anglican orders of priesthood. Some of the High Church leaders had been persuaded that the attempt might meet with unexpected success. The Papal Bull published in September was a perfectly conclusive refusal of recognition; and Archbishop Benson had to content himself with giving the English Church such consolation as might be found in the fact that, as he put it, "Infallibility had this time ventured on giving its reasons." The appointment of his successor revived for a moment ecclesiastical bitternesses. Dr Temple, Bishop of London, was nominated. He had been one of the authors of *Essays and Reviews*, and there were

many who gravely questioned his orthodoxy. He had, during his rule of the London see, shown in the matter of the reredos at St Paul's an inclination to override doctrinal controversies, and anxious Evangelicals believed that as Archbishop he would still further damp down anti-Ritualist feeling.

One of those extraordinary incidents in which London delights, as revelations of the crude romance which can lurk in a large city, occurred in October. It suddenly became known that a Chinaman named Sun Yat Sen was being imprisoned with a high hand in the house of the Chinese Legation. He had in fact been ten days in durance before he was able to communicate with friends, who took the story at once to the Foreign Office. Lord Salisbury represented to the legation that, whatever complaints it might have against the man, it was impossible to acquiesce in the bland kidnapping which had been practised. The legation, shrugging its shoulders at the strange concerns of Western civilisation, released its captive. Little was said of any charges against him; it was only understood that it was obnoxious to the Chinese Government that he should be at liberty, and the legation had calmly taken steps, when an occasion offered itself, to end that liberty.

The 14th November of this year is an important date. On that day the legal provisions, which enacted that every mechanical locomotive on a highway must be preceded by a man walking with a red flag to warn drivers of horse vehicles, ceased to exist. They had been an absolute bar to the use of motor cars in this country. That their removal would lead to anything like the amazing developments which ensued no one suspected; the agitation for removal had made only the feeblest appearance in the newspapers. The comparatively few people who really understood the potentialities of the new invention had against them almost the whole of the world of wealth and

influence. The very persons, who were in a few years to make a complete surrender to motoring, took towards it at this time much the same attitude as they had taken earlier towards cycling. They abused the invasion of the highways, they sneered at the smells and the noise and the discomforts of the cars, they predicted death or mutilation for the drivers of the machines. Those who, having no horses and no aristocratic traditions, were not inclined to be angry, were nearly as annoying in their sniggering disbelief in the power of cars. Amid the mingled chorus of abuse and jeers preparations were made for a suitable demonstration, celebrating the end of the red flag regulations. It was to take the form of a procession of cars from London to Brighton. An enormous concourse of people watched the start from a hotel in Northumberland Avenue, and to the crowd's immense gratification some of the cars failed to start at all. Others broke down on the way. Yet enough performed the journey to put an end to mere cavilling, and at the same time the confidence of the people who really understood the new invention was so firm and assured that from that moment the progress of motor cars in England was unchecked and rapid.

CHAPTER XIX

1897: JUBILEE POMPS AND VANITIES

THE nation came to the celebration of the second Jubilee in a different spirit from that in which it approached the first. It may be said that Queen Victoria was herself the centre of the loyal enthusiasm of 1887, and that in 1897 the toast was rather "Our Noble Selves." The display of military contingents from all over the world was far more elaborate than in 1887; while the crowning glory of the second celebration was the naval review at Spithead, the triumphant exhibition of the massive results of the advanced naval policy of the preceding years. The colonial representatives were also more deliberately brought into the foreground. To make a broad distinction, the Jubilee of 1887 was royal, and the affectionate participation of Europe in doing honour to a revered sovereign was the keynote; the Jubilee of 1897 was imperial, and the source of pride our vast territory and our possessions in men and money.

The year began in a singularly bad spirit with the Welsh slate quarry dispute. The quarrying system was a curious one, which had hitherto given the men no small share in the control. The quarries in question belonged to Lord Penrhyn, but the custom of working them had been to sell to contractors the right of removing the slate. Direct relations between the workmen and the owner's manager had, however, been maintained, by the existence of a men's committee; so that, in spite of the contracting system, the men were in the last resort Lord Penrhyn's men. In September of 1896 the men had complaints to make

against contractors, and had appealed for the establishment of a new system in the quarries. Lord Penrhyn did not agree to this; and, thinking it necessary to take some forcible step to insist upon his attitude, he suspended seventy-one of the men. In effect, as these were the men who had been prominent in stating the workmen's case, he suspended the committee. Later on he locked out the whole body of quarrymen. The dispute became at once extremely bitter. Lord Penrhyn refused to have anything more to do with a committee, and the men, whose system was, after all, older than Trade Unionism, were indignant at his adoption of the ordinary attitude of a fighting employer, and his treatment of their committee as if it involved a case of recognition of Trade Union representation. The dispute had elements which made it more of a deadlock than even the most obstinate of disputes had been hitherto. Firstly, Lord Penrhyn declined flatly the offer of the Board of Trade to intervene; secondly, the quarrying was highly skilled work, and there could be no cutting of the knot by importing labour; thirdly, the quarries suffered no injury from being left unworked (as coal-mines, for instance, suffer), and therefore one powerful inducement to settle the dispute was lacking. The struggle was made the subject of debate in the House of Commons early in the session, but no good came of the discussion. Even those whose natural instinct in any labour quarrel lay on the masters' side found it difficult to defend Lord Penrhyn, and had to content themselves with a general feeling that everyone concerned was behaving badly.[1] But the men's case was both skilfully and inspiringly presented in England, and a relief fund was organised, which enabled them to hold out far longer than was expected.

Apart from this, the year at its beginning was of good promise. British relations with France were believed to

[1] See, *e.g.*, *The Times*, 5th January 1897.

be improving. A terrible disaster to a great liner, the *Drummond Castle*, off the coast of Brittany, had brought into evidence the heroism of the Bretons; and the result had been a softening of international feeling. Even in Egypt signs were perceived of the passing away of irritation. The resentment aroused by the German Emperor's telegram to President Kruger had subsided in the prudent silence which he had since observed. Although there was anxiety enough about the Transvaal in official quarters, where Kruger's purchase of armaments and approaches to certain European Powers were seen as an assertion of independence, the public had in its easy way forgotten its wrath; and was suggesting that the Raid prisoners might now be released, and the affair passed over. As for Parliament, no doubt the Government would have learned its lesson from the previous year, and would be wise enough not to attempt too large or too disturbing a programme. The new Education Bill certainly looked lighter than its predecessor; it was quite a short measure, dealing only with the gift of State aid to the voluntary schools. While maintaining the principle of drawing the aid from the taxes, and not from the rates, the Government met some of the criticism of its supporters in the previous year by making the amount of the grant five shillings instead of four shillings. The Bill encountered none of the trouble inside the Cabinet and the party with which the Bill of 1896 had had to struggle, and it was passed. So was the Law of Evidence Amendment Bill, by which prisoners were allowed to give evidence on oath; those who expressed fear of great change being wrought in the character of a trial were met with the answer, that in effect the statements which prisoners were already free to make had great weight with a jury, and it would be all to the good that they should have the sanction and the restraint of being made on oath. In other ways the criminal law was at the time being reconsidered; the movement for

a court of criminal appeal was revived—cases on the capital charge, however, were proposed to be excluded from the court's power—and a committee presided over by Mr Asquith to inquire into prison administration reported in June. It found great changes for the better, but expressed the wish for more elasticity, more variation in the treatment of prisoners, amounting even to separate prisons and systems for the habitual offender and the more incidental criminal.

The great measure of the session, the Workmen's Compensation Bill, would have appeared to the onlooker quite as full of danger as the Education Bill had been in the previous year. It embodied a fairly drastic new principle. Under the existing law a workman, in order to obtain compensation for injuries caused during his employment, had to prove that they were due to negligence on the part of his employer or a fellow-workman, and had also to be free himself of any charge of contributory negligence. By the new Bill the whole range of accidents came under an automatic system of compensation. It was only by a modification introduced in committee that the employer was allowed to set up a defence against claims. Compensation was placed, in case of death, at three years' wages or £150, whichever was the larger, with a maximum payment of £300; and in case of disablement, at a weekly payment of half the wages the worker earned, with a maximum of £1 a week. It was in many respects an astonishing Bill. Hard as it was, for instance, that possible cases of contributory negligence should be included, the Government risked the hardships in order to keep the Bill workable, and close the door against the more stultifying kinds of litigation. It was no wonder that Tories asked themselves what they were coming to, nor that the usual answer to the question was that they were being swallowed by Mr Chamberlain. For the present the Bill was confined to workmen employed in railways, factories,

mines, quarries, engineering works, and docks. However, this was a wide enough range to cause masters to speak very strongly about the " charge on industry " ; and in the broadest sense this was in fact the first time that industry, and not the profits of industry, was made to bear a statutory burden of responsibility. The previous Employers' Liability Acts had all proceeded upon the basis of some tort for which employers could be sued, merely enlarging the list of torts. But the Workmen's Compensation Act made the employer liable for compensation for accidents which were inseparable from the employment, and not necessarily due to any shortcoming either in fellow-workmen or in machinery or plant. It gave a proper occasion for raising again the problem of lead-poisoning, phosphorus-poisoning in match-making, diseases of the lungs from file-cutting, etc. Mr H. J. Tennant, who had been secretary to the departmental committee on lead-poisoning, and was chairman of a similar committee on dangerous trades, which was sitting at this time, moved an instruction to include the victims of various industrial diseases in the Compensation Bill. But in view of the strong opposition which the Government had already to face on their own side, such an extension was hardly to be accepted. After all, the Bill as it stood was an immense advance.

Not the least interesting incident of the session was provided by an announcement which Mr Balfour made, almost casually, in reply to a question as to a possible inclusion of Ireland under the Agricultural Rating Act. Mr Balfour answered that, as there were no county councils in Ireland, there was no such means as the Local Taxation Exchequer Account provided in England for supplementing the remitted rates. But, he went on to say, a large payment would be made by the Exchequer, not merely to put agricultural rating in Ireland on the same footing as in England, but to allow for the landlord in Ireland not

being, as such, rated at all. Thus the way would be cleared, he added, for an Irish Local Government Bill without fear of over-taxation of landlords. This was a rather sweeping instalment of the "alternatives to Home Rule," and the announcement called forth sharp criticism. Mr Balfour, the Conservatives thought, had done enough for Ireland in 1890. His Congested Districts Board had worked energetically, and the principle involved in it was more to the taste of Conservatives than was any form of local government. Indeed, the principle was being applied unofficially in Scotland to meet the crofters' grievances. Home industries were being encouraged by landlords and by committees of ladies all over Scotland, who made a market in London and elsewhere for cottage products, and so helped the crofters and cottars to earn the living which their holdings had ceased to provide, or had never provided. The year 1897 saw Harris tweeds and homespuns becoming a craze in England, and house-parties for shooting felt it a duty to be scented with a mild flavour of peat-reek.

The retrospects of domestic affairs, indulged in as the Jubilee approached, are peculiarly interesting. The previous Jubilee had produced a summing-up of the enormous advances in invention, means of communication, and all the mechanism of modern life. On the present occasion reflection was rather directed to changes in habits, and points of view regarding social responsibilities. Thus the change in the business world which was most noted was the greatly increased value attached to statistics, the advantage taken of information about the world's markets, and in general the tendency to set up a common stock of knowledge for the use of the trading intellect. In internal government the new cult of public health was singled out for comment. It is not without significance that, whereas the Prince of Wales had proposed to commemorate the earlier Jubilee by the foundation of the Imperial

Institute, he suggested as the memorial of the second Jubilee the establishment of the Hospital Fund for London which still bears his name. We have already seen the new cult at work in connection with the periodical alarms of cholera or fever, and in the attitude towards Pasteur and Koch. The feeling was strong that remedies, instead of being the main point, were rather a confession of failure; and that the medical faculty was better occupied in producing healthy conditions than in waiting to deal with disease when it appeared. The campaign against slums, against adulteration of food, against over-pressure in factories, against sweating, now included, in alliance with those pioneers who assailed these things because they were morally wrong, the new fighters who said that they were stupid and suicidal, and gained thereby the ear of many who would have stood aside from what they considered the sentimentalities of the earlier efforts. Cleanliness and the ideal of physical fitness were vital elements in the new doctrine of efficiency; and though the desire for fitness was producing an exaggerated passion for exercise, in some ranks of the community, it had vastly improved the standards of amusement and occupation. It was easy to see, and to deplore, the fact that the new spirit could not consort with the dignities and the ceremoniousness of other days. Rotten Row of a morning now was full of tweed jackets and bowler hats; and the cycling clubs that streamed out of the large towns on a Saturday afternoon gave vent to their high spirits in a manner which profoundly offended the country gentleman. Authority was not what it had been; but the collapse of some parts of its structure had let light in upon regions where at one time there had been darkness. The great advance of the serviceableness of electric tramways was promising to supply one of the solutions of slum problems, which had found a place in the Housing Commission's recommendations. Improvements in cheap locomotion might be used

to break up congested areas, by enabling the workman to live farther from his work; and the opening of the Blackwall Tunnel in this year—an undertaking by the London County Council which not even its severest critics condemned—led to the suggestion that the council's greatest service might well be to increase the traffic facilities of London.

One retrospect made at this time, though not suggested by the Jubilee, is of some historical interest. Sir Isaac Pitman, the inventor of the most successful system of shorthand, died early in the year; and the occasion was taken for the question whether the greater facility for providing verbatim reports of speeches, which had been the result of his invention, had tended to the clarifying of politics. When the question was asked, there had not been time to see that recent developments of the Press were of a kind to nullify very largely Pitman's invention. The halfpenny newspaper, necessarily smaller than the penny paper, had not space to give to verbatim reports of speeches. Moreover, the public to which it appealed did not, as a whole, want to read entire speeches; it wanted to be given, as briefly as possible, enough of the tenor of the speech to be able to talk about it. Therefore even if the invention of shorthand had in the past done anything to clarify politics, it was already too late to think of it as an effective force. The halfpenny Press was to be increased, before many years were over, by the lowering in price and size of two of the penny morning papers, which had suffered from the competition of the original halfpenny Press. That competition was also to act in subtler ways by making the people who still held to penny papers impatient of long reports. Shorthand had a firm foothold in commercial life, and Pitman remained a great inventor; but for newspaper purposes his system had already seen its best days.

Although the populace made this second Jubilee much

more imperial in spirit than the first one, yet to the inner circle by the throne it was more domestic. The Queen's age now weighed heavily upon her. She hardly ever appeared in public; and those whom she received in audience noticed change creeping at last upon the venerable figure. It had come rather suddenly. It was but three years since Mr Gladstone, as Prime Minister, had seen her frequently in audience, and yet, when he was received by the Queen at Cimiez in the spring of this year he noticed a great difference. "The Queen's manner," he wrote at the time, "did not show the old and usual vitality"; and, remarking that the Queen's answers in conversation appeared to him to be very slight, he adds: "To speak frankly, it seemed to me that the Queen's peculiar faculty and habit of conversation had disappeared."[1] Queen Victoria was now not far from eighty years of age, and such ceremonies as those of 1887 were out of the question. In place of the service of that year in Westminster Abbey a less fatiguing form of thanksgiving was devised, which spared her even descent from her carriage. The procession went to St Paul's Cathedral; and the service was held on the great west steps, which were massed from top to bottom with notabilities in uniform. In the centre the rich copes of archbishops and bishops, and the white surplices of the choir, climbed the slope from the point at which the Queen's carriage was to stop. The glitter of equerries, aides-de-camp, and the escort filled the level semicircle facing the steps; and the immense, glowing picture was framed by tiers upon tiers of spectators in the houses overlooking it. The crowd in the streets was not quite what it had been in 1887. Observers noted that, while for three or four days vast numbers of people had paraded the decorated route of the procession, there was not on the morning of the procession that early rush for places which had been so remarkable ten years before.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 524.

There was certainly much of the flatness of a repetition. Yet London and the whole country kept holiday to the full. The Queen gallantly bore her share in the festivities, and gave a garden-party at Buckingham Palace, which was chiefly remembered as drawing off so many Members of Parliament from their duties that the Government suffered three successive defeats in the division lobbies. But the great event of the Jubilee celebrations was the naval review. Assembled for it at Spithead were a hundred and sixty-five warships, the fruit of ten years' costly work—the navy of the new spirit. It was the Home Fleet only, no ships having been recalled from foreign stations. Next to the ships themselves, the presence of the colonial representatives at the review was the centre of interest. Mr Chamberlain had announced at the opening of the session that the Prime Ministers of the self-governing colonies had been invited to the Jubilee, not only to take part in the celebrations, but also to confer with the Government on imperial questions. Their visit was made of much greater importance than it had been in 1887. Mr Chamberlain had struck a new note in his administration of the Colonial Office, and the colonies were no longer regarded as possessions making somewhat exacting demands upon the mother country's provision for defence, but as sources of power and energy.[1] The Colonial Conference showed the new feeling in an absence of the somewhat barren amiability of the proceedings of 1887. Thus the discussion of naval affairs was accompanied by a warning to Australia to beware of her inclination to think of her contribution to imperial naval expenditure as necessarily entitling her to a kind of private sentry-go on her coasts. Mr Chamberlain appealed to the Premiers to remember that legislation in the colonies against immigrant coloured labour could not be made a local question in an empire which had responsibilities to

[1] Mr Chamberlain at the Colonial Institute, 31st March 1897.

millions of coloured subjects. A resolution was passed at the conference in favour of federation, wherever such a movement was geographically possible; and an offer by Canada of a preferential tariff in favour of British trade led to a complicated discussion of existing fiscal treaties and most-favoured-nation clauses. The idea of a Customs Union within the empire was never very far from Mr Chamberlain's thoughts.

Just as the great days of the Jubilee came to an end, there appeared in *The Times*[1] a poem which stirred the nation to an extraordinary degree. Afire with the pride of the spectacle of power and majesty, it struck a chord which prolonged as nothing else could have done the reverberations of the vibrating national spirit. It was Mr Rudyard Kipling's *Recessional*. In that poem, more than in any of the pomps of the Jubilee days, history will see represented the spirit of this year. In a nation which for a century had not had to fight for its life, which had in that period grown so wealthy that huge increases in its bill for armaments were met with little more than momentary murmurs, what was the true range of patriotism? In a community so accustomed to security, so confident in its material resources of defence, what was happening to the soul of the people? To many it seemed to be growing at once more assertive and less determined, more demonstrative and less persistent, more swiftly responsive but more easily diverted in attention. Mr Kipling had made actual to the English populace the daily round of far-distant wheels in the machine of empire. He had created a consciousness of the curious dullness, which familiarity with catch-words of rule produced in the heart of empire—the routine response to patriotic stimulus, which was really no response at all. He now struck this new consciousness a ringing blow. With an insight brilliantly alert he gave to the pride of the

[1] On 17th July 1897.

moment exactly the right turn for the moment. On one side of the modern mind, the dislike of ostentatious superiority, the worship of fitness rather than superficial appearances, *Recessional* went to the very heart of the matter. To another side, the side of easy lip-patriotism, it was a warning. To the people as a whole it emphasised in the most remarkable way the feeling that the displays of naval and military power were a fresh start. A start for what end? That, apparently, did not matter. The point was that we were not, as in 1887, to review achievements, and sun ourselves in them; we were to set our faces forward.

On the north-west frontier of India operations had been undertaken against the warlike tribes inhabiting the mountain regions between India and Afghanistan, and were proving difficult and dangerous. The mountaineers, though not at any point in the campaign a really large force, made skilful use of the baffling nature of their country, and the heroism of British and Indian troops was severely tried. As the year advanced, temper was rising again in South African affairs. In April Sir Alfred Milner, a young man who had hitherto been known only for his work in connection with Lord Cromer's re-establishment of the finances of Egypt, and as Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, left England to succeed Sir Hercules Robinson as High Commissioner of Cape Colony. Such an appointment must obviously have special reasons; they were found by the general public in a belief that Sir Alfred Milner went out as Mr Chamberlain's mouthpiece. The nature of his instructions was guessed at when Mr Chamberlain, at a dinner to Sir Alfred Milner on his departure, spoke of the hope of persuading the two white races in South Africa to live together in goodwill, but also spoke with firmness of the Convention of London, and of the British as "the paramount power in South Africa." In July the report of the South Africa Committee, ap-

pointed to inquire into the Raid, was published. Mr Cecil Rhodes had been called as a witness ; *Punch's* cartoon that week was of the shade of Warren Hastings meeting Mr Rhodes at the committee-room door, and saying : "*I* succeeded, and was impeached. *You* fail—and are called as a witness ! " [1] The report laid the responsibility for the plans in South Africa, of which the Raid was the premature revelation, on Mr Rhodes, Mr Beit and Mr Rutherfoord Harris. It exonerated the High Commissioner and the Colonial Office of any privity to what was going on, and in that opinion the four principal Liberal members of the committee, Sir William Harcourt, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr John Ellis and Mr Sydney Buxton, agreed. Mr Rhodes was by this time no longer either Premier of Cape Colony or managing director of the British South Africa Company. Men condoled with him ; those vast schemes which had touched the English imagination seemed to be driven into abeyance. The publication of the report was followed within a few days by a debate in the House of Commons. Certain telegrams bearing upon Mr Rhodes's position had not been produced. They were in the possession of Mr B. F. Hawksley, solicitor to the British South Africa Company. He, when in the witness chair, had declined to produce them ; and before he was called, Mr Rhodes, who might have been asked to insist upon their production, had returned to South Africa. It was believed that the committee had not full information before them without those telegrams. Sir William Harcourt and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, to whom attack upon this point had been specially addressed by Mr Philip Stanhope and Mr Courtney, denied that there was any reason to suppose that the telegrams would materially have altered the committee's decision. Mr Chamberlain, free of the accusations that by the unofficial medium of Miss Flora Shaw, a

[1] *Punch*, 6th February 1897.

special correspondent of *The Times*, he was secretly in touch with Mr Rhodes, made his own vigorous defence of the committee. The feeling behind the attack was not solely concerned with the committee. It was almost as much an anxious suspicion that this clearing of reputations was really a clearing of the decks for action; and that if Mr Chamberlain and Mr Rhodes had not understood one another before, they did so now. President Kruger had sent to the British Government a claim for a large indemnity for the Raid. This "bill for intellectual and moral damage" became at once a joke in England; but it was a wry joke, and people grew more and more inclined to say that, if President Kruger was determined not to let the affair blow over, Mr Rhodes and his friends were not to be deserted.

"Africa," said Lord Salisbury at the Guildhall banquet this year, "was created to be the plague of the Foreign Office." He was not thinking of the Transvaal, which was the concern of another department. Central Africa, which a few years earlier had laid Uganda upon the Government's shoulders, was now offering a new burden in the shape of Nigeria. The Royal Niger Company, owing to the successes of Sir George Goldie in Nupé and Ilorin, was now within range of the spheres of influence of other European countries; and it was therefore becoming impossible to leave the affairs of their territory any longer in private hands, capably though the company was being administered. The massacre of an unarmed British expedition near Benin City had called forth another small war. French influence was extremely active in regions bordering on the Niger, and the Foreign Office could not regard its new tasks with complacency. At the same time the charges against the administration of the Congo State became more direct and articulate. The root of the matter was laid bare in the argument that a country like the Congo could not by legitimate means be made to produce

revenue, not only for the cost of administration, but for enriching exalted persons in Belgium. The virtual closing of the country to traders of other than Belgian nationality was suspicious, and some of the missionaries were giving terrible accounts of the forcing of the rubber trade. The trial of Dr Carl Peters in Berlin this year on charges of excessive cruelty in German East Africa, for which he was sentenced to be dismissed the service and to pay fines, was disturbing the general conscience on the conditions of European rule in Africa.

A curious incident of the year in England was a fresh onslaught on betting, which threatened at one time to have astonishing results. The Anti-Gambling League had brought an extremely bold test case. Its secretary, Mr Hawke, sued a bookmaker named Dunn, and in the result three judges, including so notoriously sporting a judge as Mr Justice Hawkins, held that Tattersall's ring was a "place" within the meaning of the Act of 1853, which made illegal resort to any place for the purpose of betting. Dunn was merely walking about in the ring at Hurst Park without any mark of his calling, and therefore the case appeared to settle the whole question of the legality of betting. If betting in the ring was illegal, would not any place where a bet was made become a "place" under the Act? It must be said that a number of sporting people were not sorry to see the attack upon professional bookmaking. It had spread from horse-racing to football; and seemed likely to provide a form of excitement which might in the end destroy interest in sport and athletics, and reduce them to mere means for gambling. In a second case, Powell *v.* Kempton Park Racecourse Company, the Lord Chief Justice, following the previous decision, held that the plaintiff was entitled to an injunction restraining the defendants from opening Tattersall's enclosure; and the company's defence, that they did not open it for betting purposes and need not be held to know

what went on in it, was in vain. The situation promised to become farcical, when the Court of Appeal (the case reached that court in a month, which gives some measure of the place of sport in English affairs) reversed the Lord Chief Justice's decision. One Lord Justice in the Appeal Court still held to it that every place where a bet was made was a "place" within the Act, not shrinking from the logical conclusion that this would render every private bet illegal. The case was carried to the House of Lords, and there went finally against the Anti-Gambling League, by a majority of eight to two of the law lords. The vexed question of the meaning of the word "place" in the Act of 1853 was settled by the House of Lords' judgment, which ruled that the word must be held to apply to some "house, room or office," or place of that kind, and could not fairly be applied to a quarter of an acre of ground on a racecourse.

The Penrhyn quarry dispute lasted until nearly the end of August. Helped by private collections all over the country, and also by funds raised by Welsh choirs, the men had held out for almost a year. In the settlement which was reached at last they won the right of combination in a minor degree, but Lord Penrhyn carried his decision to allow no general quarry committee, and to refuse to receive any complaints except from individuals, or from a deputation of the particular class of men professing a grievance—in a word, his refusal to recognise the men as a body corporate. The men also obtained the stoppage of the practice of sub-letting contracts, which had led to a sweating of wages. Meanwhile a serious strike of engineers had broken out; the London men demanded an eight-hours day. The masters replied by discharging 25 per cent. of their men; and the masters in the north-east of England and on the Clyde, in order to stand by the London masters, discharged men in the same proportion, with the intention of burdening the trade

union with out-of-work pay to a degree which would prevent the union's resources being exclusively at the service of the London men. Then the union called out all its men in the trade, and by the beginning of July the dispute, which had started in London in May, had reached very grave proportions. Seventy thousand men were on strike; and the strike came at a time when the works were full of orders; electric tramways were spreading with great rapidity, and there was a vast quantity of work to be done in equipping them. The strike was a determined one; the trade union held out in a manner which caused the masters to assert that it must be using for strike pay funds accumulated for other purposes, such as superannuation pay. It was suggested also that, in order to keep the funds up, the union was winking at the return to work of some of its men. In December two proposals for a settlement, reached by conference, were put to a ballot of the men—the first that the masters' assertion of unquestioned control of their works should be accepted, and the second that there should be a provisional arrangement for a fifty-one-hours week, as approximating to the men's demand. Mr John Burns (himself an engineer) and other leaders of the strike introduced into the eight-hours-day demand an offer to take only one meal-time in the day. The proposals were rejected by an overwhelming majority of the men, and the strike continued. There were threatenings of strikes among the railwaymen and the cotton employees as well, but these were fortunately averted. Labour was concentrating its aims anew, after its defeats at the polls two years previously. The Trade Union Congress of 1897 put forward a very large programme, which included, in addition to the eight-hours day, the taxation of ground values, the limitation of shop hours, reform of the law of conspiracy, the abolition of child labour under the age of fifteen and of night labour for all persons under the age of eighteen, and a number of detailed

matters of inspection and supervision of industry. The milder form of comment on this list was that it lacked legislative definiteness; but the social legislation of the past years was producing a sharper comment to the effect that Labour was acquiring a privileged position in the community. The annual Labour report of the Board of Trade spoke of general diminution of hours of work, and general increase of wages, including even the agricultural labourer. The case of the small employer was felt to be growing hard; but it was not perceived that the economic changes, which had drawn so much accumulated capital into manufacture, must necessarily alter the position of the small employer. He could not regard his returns in the same light as a man could, to whom they were but dividend on money invested. However, some of the conferences of Labour, such as those of the Miners, the Co-operative Societies, the Friendly Societies, suggested the comforting comment that Labour had more interests and more voices than its most advanced spokesmen represented; in the multiplicity some safety for the employers was felt to be implied. A suggestion was made, upon the publication in July of a Home Office report on some dangerous trades—the handling of horse-hair and rags, especially—that the trade unions might do good by calling the attention of workmen to the perils of carelessness in such trades, and educating the men to attend to the precautions specified in Home Office rules. But for the moment the unions could hardly deal with more than their conflicts with capital.

The year witnessed two notable events in the history of art in England. The Tate Gallery was opened, and for the first time the work of modern English painters, who had led a genuinely indigenous movement, became an acknowledged portion of the fabric of British art. In the main the collection housed in the Gallery was, indeed, a thoroughly official collection; the Royal Academy held sway, and at once began the policy of using the Gallery as

a repository of works bought under the Chantrey Bequest. Yet even this was not altogether a disadvantage; the accumulation in public of the fruits of a fund administered in a spirit completely at variance with the most enlightened and most informed views of the day was a demonstration of the narrowness of the Academy's range. The other event of the year was the passing of the famous Wallace Collection into the possession of the nation. It had long been known as one of the greatest collections in existence, the main portion consisting of French furniture and decorative objects, and French pictures and sculpture; there was also a choice collection of armour of all periods and countries, Japanese, Indian and Arabian, as well as European. The whole had been collected by Sir Richard Wallace, who was supposed to be the natural son of the fourth Marquis of Hertford, and so grandson of the notorious Marquis, who was the original of Thackeray's Lord Steyne and Disraeli's Lord Monmouth. For this account of his parentage there is no known authority. Sir Richard Wallace, who had been Lord Hertford's confidential secretary and adopted son, lived all his life in Paris, modest and retiring, but known to connoisseurs as perhaps the greatest collector of the age. At the time of his death in 1890 there was some speculation as to the future of the collection, which it was believed he had destined for the British nation. But he died without making a will, and his treasures passed absolutely to Lady Wallace. In 1897 she died, and it was found that she had done what he had been expected to do. After some discussion as to the suitable housing of the collection the Government acquired Hertford House, in Manchester Square; and were thus able to display the wonderful things in the town mansion of the family from which their collector had derived his fortune.

One of the results of the conflict of opinion on the assistance to be given to Voluntary schools was to bring

out the great elasticity with which the Education Acts were now being administered. The strides made by technical education have already been mentioned. It was basing itself on the broadest view of its objects, and a report published by the Technical Education Board of the London County Council early this year lays down, as principles of the Board's work, that the early stages of scientific training must be purely educational, not technological, and that the only lasting commercial value of technical instruction was in its being given to well-educated minds. The same conclusions, though in a negative form, were really inherent in the neat criticism made by *The Times* on the proceedings of an International Conference on Technical Education, held in June. The criticism was that in this country the quality of technical education in the upper grades was not high enough, while the quantity of it in the lower grades was wasteful.[1] The hope of those interested in national education rested largely in the Higher Grade Board Schools, institutions which had grown up quietly under the Education Acts, though they had not been contemplated by the framers of the Acts. There were now sixty of them in Great Britain, fifty-five being under School Board management. The lower classes in these schools were taught on the lines of the upper standards of a public elementary school; the higher classes were taught as an "organised science school" under the Science and Art Department of the Board of Education. Such instruction lasted for three years, and included science, mathematics, drawing, manual training, English, and at least one foreign language. All the schools were large ones, accommodating from five hundred to two thousand children each, and all had been filled as soon as they were opened, thus proving themselves the answer to a real demand. They supplied what nothing else supplied, an extension of elementary education, by which scholars of

[1] *The Times*, 17th June 1897.

any merit could pass on without a break to opportunities of mental equipment. The Science and Art Department usually bore a considerable share of the expense of the higher classes. But there was a hostile feeling among ratepayers against the schools. True, in some cases it died down after a few years' experience of the results; but this was not a general rule. Moreover, there were a very large number of small country grammar schools, depending for their prosperity upon the fees paid by the small tradesmen or the artisans, who liked their children to go to better institutions than the elementary schools. These now found the higher grade schools good enough for their purpose, and saved themselves grammar school fees. The grammar schools consequently complained of unfair competition, and found no insignificant body of ratepayers ready to join in the charge that higher education could not be given by the Board schools without misappropriation of rates.

The new spirit in the stamping out of disease by attacking its direct and contributory causes was active this year, both in matters of housing and of water-supply, owing to outbreaks of typhoid fever at Maidstone and King's Lynn; and also in drastic orders for the muzzling of dogs. The Government pursued this latter policy in the face of grumbling, which even amounted, it was thought, to a decrease of the Unionist vote at some bye-elections. Respectable people, who could see readily enough that the application of severe sanitary regulations in poor quarters was wise, refused to have severe regulations applied in another matter to themselves. Yet the medical authorities, and Pasteur himself, had asserted over and over again that in any country a universal muzzling order, combined with measures of quarantine for all imported dogs, would entirely put an end to rabies. The Government now took the bold course, and issued a universal muzzling order in April. They could point, before the year was

out, to notable proof of the value of their action. In 1895 there had been over the whole country 608 cases of rabies; in 1897 there were only 141. In London alone, where the London County Council had already achieved some good results, the cases in 1896 numbered 161, and in 1897 only 29. The previous application of a muzzling order to Lancashire and Yorkshire [1] had reduced the number of cases in those counties from 461 in 1895, to 39 in 1896. Ten years later, as has been remarked earlier in this volume, England had practically forgotten that such a disease as rabies existed.

The summer of 1897 was the period of the famous rush to the Klondyke goldfields. It had long been known that gold was in those regions of the extreme North-West [2]; but the appalling difficulties of approach to the country—access by the almost Arctic rivers and passes being only possible for a few weeks during the summer—and the miseries and privations of life there, when once the mines were reached, had hitherto held back all but the stoutest pioneers. But now the gold fever broke out, and terrors could not stand against it. Men poured northward, some by boat to the Klondyke River, others madly by the land route through Western Canada. They died in hundreds, the vast majority of men starting with no knowledge whatever of the difficulties of the journey or the delays to be provided against. Death held the Chilcoot Pass, as he had never held the most arid waste of Australia in the days of the gold fever there.

Two events filled the newspapers just before Christmas. One was the death of William Terriss, an extremely popular actor of melodrama. He was stabbed as he was entering the stage-door of the Adelphi Theatre, by a man who had been disappointed in applications for charitable relief. It was a strange thing that a man who had suffered in his life so many fictitious violences, should meet his end

[1] See page 396.

[2] See page 56.

by violence. The other event, while in one sense treated as comic, was not without serious effect upon the temper of the country in international affairs. The German Emperor had decided to send a squadron of warships to China, where some German missionaries had been killed. Throughout the year there had been a somewhat undignified scramble for advantage in China on the part of the European Powers, owing to the success of Japan in forcing open Chinese markets to her trade by operations of war. On the departure of the German squadron from Kiel the Emperor charged his brother, Prince Henry of Prussia, who was in command, to remember that he went as "the mailed fist" of German authority. Prince Henry replied in a like strain, to the effect that he would inscribe his brother's augustness on his banners. England was very ready to seize upon the ludicrous side of these exchanges; but the jesting sprang from the spirit of suspicion with which Englishmen had regarded every act of the young Emperor, since his accession to the throne.

CHAPTER XX

1898: MOSTLY OTHER PEOPLE'S AFFAIRS

ENGLAND showed now a singular unconsciousness of what was at hand; the army establishment was increased, the navy was strengthened both in ships and in men; and never had such increases been made with less public concern, or less anxiety as to the need for them.

In truth it was a year of lively interests quite dissociated from the main preoccupation of the Government. Some of these interests were other people's business rather than our own, but that did not prevent us from expressing ourselves about them. In one instance our expression of opinion undoubtedly did harm; in another it did good.

At the beginning of the year France was torn asunder by the violent controversy which had arisen, a few months earlier, as to the conviction of Captain Alfred Dreyfus on a charge of selling French military secrets to Germany. He had been condemned by court martial, and was now a prisoner on Devil's Island, the French penal settlement. Many notable Frenchmen found the conviction lying heavy on their consciences. Captain Dreyfus was a Jew, and there was an uncomfortable fear that Anti-Semite feeling had counted far too heavily in the trial, if indeed it had not entirely dictated the proceedings. Those who believed in the accused's innocence thought that the efforts to detect the criminal had ended somewhat too readily when suspicion pointed to an officer who was a Jew. The agitation in France rose

in January to a dangerous height. One newspaper, *Le Siècle*, published in full the text of the indictment against Captain Dreyfus, which it could not have done unless the agitation had some supporters in high place in the army. Another newspaper, *L'Aurore*, published a tremendous letter from M. Zola, the novelist, accusing the Government, the judiciary, the police, the heads of the army, and other national authorities of gross perversion of justice. A new trial of Captain Dreyfus was demanded. On the other side, Anti-Semite feeling allied itself with the passionate devotion of France to her army; and all who ventured to call in question a decision by an army tribunal on an army case were assailed as traitors of the lowest kind. English opinion, not at the moment disposed to take the kindliest views of French affairs, plunged in to support the champions of Dreyfus; and when Colonel Picquart, who had boldly taken the side of those demanding revision of the sentence, was placed in retirement, English criticism grew louder. Profound ignorance of the facts of the case, and of the procedure of the court martial, did not prevent people in this country from confidently expressing their views; and the objection felt by French people to any reconsideration of an army verdict found practically no sympathy here. M. Zola was put on his trial in Paris for his assault upon the various national institutions, and was sentenced to undergo one year's imprisonment, and to pay a fine of 3000 francs. At once people on this side of the Channel, who had no good word to say for M. Zola as an author, found plenty to say for him as a martyr. In French eyes the attitude of Great Britain at this time must have been very offensive, not so much because of its busybody interference, as because of its contemptuous dismissal of French susceptibilities as to the honour of the army.

But at the height of this controversy a more startling event drew off British attention. The United States warship

Maine was sunk by an explosion in Havana harbour; and swift as the news itself was the universal conclusion that war between the United States and Spain would follow. Those two countries had for some time been on bad terms. Spain, comparatively poor, and no longer possessing the strong arm of ancient days, had been struggling against a revolution in Cuba, which, pitilessly repressed in a sporadic way, remained vigorous and persistent. The Cuban revolutionaries had enlisted the sympathy of the United States; but Spain, finding her task difficult enough as it was, did not incline to reply amiably to intervention by the Americans. The lives of American citizens in Havana, the seat of the Spanish Government in Cuba, were considered to be in some jeopardy when rioting took place there; the cruiser *Maine* was sent to anchor in the harbour for their protection and their refuge in case of necessity. About this time opinion in the United States was inflamed by the publication of some unofficial letters written by the Spanish Minister in Washington, in which he had commented in undiplomatic language on the relations between the States and the Cuban insurgents. When the news came of the sinking of the *Maine* on 15th February there was probably not an American in the whole of the States who did not believe it to be the act of Spaniards—a deliberate and dastardly act of hostility.

But before war actually broke out, a third shifting of British interest occurred. The reconquest of the Soudan was undertaken in good earnest. A year earlier, on 5th February 1897, Sir Michael Hicks Beach had announced in the House of Commons the intention of the Government to "give the final blow to the baleful power of the Khalifa." The year had passed without any very spectacular movement. But the railway was pushed forward from Wady Halfa towards Abu Hamed, a short cut avoiding the bend of the Nile by Dongola, and on 7th August 1897 Abu Hamed

was occupied after a sharp fight in which all the dervishes engaged against the Egyptian troops were either killed or made prisoners. So complete a defeat had its effects at once. Berber was evacuated by the Khalifa's forces and occupied by the Egyptians, the advance of the railway to that point being immediately undertaken. The beginning of 1898 brought more exciting news. Kitchener reported that the dervishes were advancing upon him from Khartoum. He made ready for them, if they should choose to be the attackers, and encamped in a strong position between Berber and the junction of the river Atbara with the Nile. The Emir Mahmoud brought 12,000 dervishes up to Nakheila, on the Atbara; as he came no farther, Kitchener, not liking his immobility, sent out reconnaissances. Mahmoud was found in a strong zariba in the bush, and Kitchener laid his plans with caution. On 8th April he attacked, and in forty minutes Mahmoud himself was a prisoner, 2000 of his men were dead, and the rest scattered to the desert perils of privation and thirst. Machine guns, vastly improved since the days of the earlier Soudan warfare, accounted now, as later in the year, for the very large numbers of the slain. News of this battle made real to people at home the work of reconquest, and during the summer British reinforcements were despatched to join the forces under Kitchener's command.

A fortnight later war had formally broken out between the United States and Spain. The States Senate recognised the independence of Cuba, the respective diplomatic envoys were withdrawn, a squadron of the American fleet sailed from Key West for Havana, and the whole energy of the American nation went into pouring troops, regulars and volunteers, southward to Florida for transhipment to Cuba. At the same time another Spanish possession, Manila, was attacked by a squadron which had been at Hong-Kong. The war has a place in a history of the

English people, because every phase of it was followed with the keenest interest here. At times it was a somewhat hilarious interest. We had not then had our own experience of the uncertainties of bombardment with modern long-range weapons and modern explosives; so that the occasional intimations from the Spanish side of ludicrously small results of an apparently terrific bombardment (the mule of Matanzas, reported to be the only casualty of a gun-fire of many hours, became quite famous) were received with jesting. Moreover, though Admiral Dewey succeeded in promptly destroying the Spanish fleet in Manila harbour, the Spaniards showed every sign of making a good fight elsewhere. Admiral Cervera succeeded in navigating a fleet right across the Atlantic and entering Santiago harbour, eluding all the American warships that were scouring the sea to intercept him. No one thought the conflict a level one, but this achievement somewhat restored the balance for the moment.

Home affairs presented very little of interest. Business was good on the whole, and the Bankers' Clearing House returns reached the highest total yet known. Gold imports had become so large that, besides satisfying the requirements of other countries, England was at last able to increase materially her own bullion reserve. It is no diminution of these evidences of prosperity to find the Stock Exchange rather less active. There were, as we shall shortly see, reasons which checked speculation by the general public. Save for a coal strike in South Wales there was no serious trade dispute. In science no new theory or new invention arose to catch the popular mind; but for those behind the scenes the advances made in knowledge of the properties of the Hertzian waves, upon which wireless telegraphy was founded, were considerable. Mr W. H. Preece, chief of the engineering department of the Post Office, and Dr Oliver Lodge were busy with

experiments; but the experiments which were already making the name of Marconi famous were meeting with more obvious success. Parliament met for a session to which very little attention was paid. The Ministerial party was again attacked by acute indigestion in assimilating Liberal Unionism. Lingering fragments of Mr Chamberlain's Radicalism were discerned in a Bill designed to meet the unwavering hostility of large numbers of people to vaccination, by permitting parents to make a declaration before a magistrate, expressing conscientious objection to the method of inoculation. His influence, again, was traced in the introduction of the Irish Local Government Bill, which Mr Balfour had promised. Both measures were attended with friction throughout their course. But it was almost entirely parliamentary friction; and there was little controversy in the country on domestic affairs. The Army Estimates showed an increase of 21,739 men in the establishment; the Navy Estimates reached almost twenty-four million pounds, and provided for fresh construction of ships and for an increase of 6300 men. Most remarkable of all, a supplementary naval vote of no less than eight millions was passed practically without discussion during July. The spirit of the Liberal party was at a deplorably low ebb. We have had occasion to see that, even before Mr Gladstone's retirement, the party had had little unity save in devotion to him. After his retirement the rifts opened rapidly. Lord Rosebery's surrender of the leadership led only to a momentary bridging of them; and they were now opening again under Sir William Harcourt. An advanced section, joining hands with the Labour members, refused to forgive the leaders for having missed the opportunity in 1894 of trying conclusions with the House of Lords. Another section, weary of the continuance of a Whig tradition in leadership, clamoured for a leader of true modern Radicalism. Yet another section, feeling the

new Imperial spirit in the air, were of opinion that a narrow and nagging temper was being displayed in perpetual criticisms of Mr Chamberlain. The utter weakness of the opposition caused by these divisions, was responsible both for languor in Parliament and for lack of public interest in politics.

On 19th May Mr Gladstone died. That was, indeed, no occasion for the refreshment of party loyalty alone; it was by common consent a time of universal mourning and national pride. The four years since Mr Gladstone's retirement, to him the means of a calm and dignified approach to death, had given him back to the nation from the strife of party. The British people rose to the height of that noble appreciation of a life greatly lived which sounded from all the world outside. From France, from Russia, from the British colonies and the United States came tributes of honour and respect; from Italy, Greece and Macedonia came expressions of a more profound sense of loss and of a more intimate gratitude for the work of a great lover of freedom. By a decision which had no precedent in our history, and was a worthy acceptance by the nation of the lofty sentiment of the civilised world, Mr Gladstone's body was laid in state in Westminster Hall, and for two days multitudes of people of every rank filed past the bier.[1] On 28th May the body was buried in Westminster Abbey; and, as the lying-in-state had been the token of Mr Gladstone's place in the hearts of the people, his funeral was the token of his place among the rulers of the people. The Prince of Wales and the Duke of York walked beside the coffin as pall-bearers; and other pall-bearers were the Prime Minister and the leaders of the two parties in both Houses of Parliament, Lord Rosebery, the Duke of Rutland, and Mr Gladstone's friends, Lord Rendel and Mr Armitstead. Representatives

[1] The police calculated that 250,000 people passed through the Hall during the two days.

of foreign sovereigns were present. The mighty mould of the leader who had passed away was everywhere recognised. New problems were arising for his successors, in an England that he hardly recognised. "I am thankful," he wrote after his retirement,[1] "to have borne a great part in the emancipating labours of the last sixty years, but entirely uncertain how, had I now to begin my life, I could face the very different problems of the next sixty years. Of one thing I am, and always have been, convinced—it is not by the State that man can be regenerated and the terrible woes of this darkened world effectually dealt with." That was the voice of the past; and yet at the moment what voice had the future? None, it would seem, in the leaders of Liberalism, who, distracted and divided among themselves, knew not what their party was, nor where it stood. To some of those by the grave in the Abbey it may well have seemed that they were burying not only a famous Liberal, but all the Liberalism they knew.

The pace of the American attack in Cuba now quickened. Transport difficulties and delays were to some extent overcome; and the fleet under Admiral Schley blockaded Santiago harbour. Again an event occurred at home to catch the wandering interest of newspaper readers. It was announced with startling abruptness that Mr E. T. Hooley had filed his petition in bankruptcy. He was a man who had risen almost as abruptly into prominence, a promoter of companies extremely active during the boom in the cycle manufacturing trade. He had reconstituted and refloated several large firms, and had also placed upon the investment market a good many mechanical inventions connected with cycling. In the full flush of his career he had bought large estates in the country, and made some lavish public gifts. His suite of rooms in one of the big London hotels was accustomed to witness daily levees of

[1] To Mr G. W. E. Russell. See Mr Russell's *One Look Back*, p. 265.

financiers, brokers, large and small investors, journalists, traders, inventors, cranks. Company-promoting, profitable as it had been for years past, had never before reached so picturesque a point, had never been such an obvious and theatrical wielding of forces; the limited liability system in England had never presented itself in so personal a manifestation. The news of the bankruptcy was a thunderbolt. It was the end of the cycle boom, and the beginning of difficult times for companies overweighted by a capital disproportionate to any requirements save those of a boom. Fashion had already tired of its new toy, and Battersea Park no longer glittered with expensive machines. American manufacturers were sending over by thousands machines of a lighter and less expensive type than the English; the competition in the home market was cutting prices. Meanwhile France was commanding the market for motor cars; and the British cycle firms, which might have taken up the new invention, were caught in the toils of depression. The names of various public men were bandied to and fro during the bankruptcy proceedings in Mr Hooley's case; and once again company-promoting acquired a reputation which checked even the most ardent speculator.

The war between the United States and Spain ended in August. Early in July Admiral Cervera made a gallant but desperate attempt to break through the blockade of Santiago. His fleet steamed out of the harbour, and turned along the coast. Within a few hours every ship was destroyed or captured. Some were sunk, some ran ashore blazing from stem to stern. Santiago surrendered to the American land forces on 17th July, and on 12th August peace negotiations were opened, which ended in Spain's acquiescence in the independence of Cuba, and the ceding of Manila to the United States.

The beginning of September brought news far more exciting to England. On the 2nd of that month the British

and Egyptian forces had practically destroyed the Khalifa's army at Omdurman, and on the 4th Kitchener had re-occupied Khartoum. The flag again waved on those ruined walls of the palace, its absence from which had been so tragically noted on that January morning in 1885. Great was the pride in this assertion of British power and persistence; but not less strong an element in the enthusiasm with which the news was received was the revelation of our possession of a new soldier of the first rank. The battle of Omdurman had been won by more than fighting; and the interest in the accounts of the battle was not greater than the interest in all that could be told of the masterly organisation, the practical care for troops, the sheer business ability with which Kitchener had brought his army to its victory. True, it was known later that for a short time he had been in a somewhat dangerous position; and that, if the Khalifa had had any officer of tactical ability, or any renegade European adviser at his elbow, Kitchener's communications might have been cut, and he would then have been less able to choose the moment of attack in confidence.[1] But there was no doubt that the movements of the past two years had been masterly, exhaustively considered, and above all made, so far as such movements could be made, in all the security and material comfort that forethought could provide for the troops. Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, as he was at once made, became a popular idol of a new kind. Men worshipped in him a grim and relentless efficiency, a cool soldierliness. The ideal of the dashing warrior gave place to the ideal of the "dead-certainty warrior." There was, indeed, a severe completeness in the battle. Of 40,000 or 50,000 dervishes who had met him before the walls of Omdurman, 11,000 were killed and 16,000 wounded. The British and Egyptian forces numbered only 22,000 men—less than the casualties alone on the other side—and their losses were but three officers

[1] Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, ii. 94, footnote.

and forty-three men killed, and twenty-one officers and three hundred and twenty men wounded. The Khalifa himself, with a band of his principal emirs and a broken force of dervishes, escaped from the slaughter and wandered for a year in the desert. Then on 24th November 1899 he too was swept into the iron completeness of the work. One of Lord Kitchener's officers, who afterwards succeeded him as Sirdar, Sir Francis Wingate, surprised the flying, harried little army by rapid and skilful marches, and brought it to bay. When that last fight was over the Khalifa was found dead on the field, with every one of his emirs dead, each on his prayer-mat, around their leader. The total cost of the two years' campaign under the man of marvellous organisation was no more than £2,354,000.

The reconquest of the Soudan had been saved, by a mistake on the part of France and Russia, from being hampered by international complications.[1] Could the future government of it equally be saved? Before this question was asked the British and Egyptian flags were hoisted side by side at Khartoum; and though diplomatists might find no proper formula for a joint control by Great Britain and Egypt, in which Great Britain was first, and yet Egypt not quite second, the solution took that form, and succeeded in spite of its resistance to formulation. The most critical danger arose within a week of the battle of Omdurman. The move made by the French towards the Upper Nile, to which Sir Charles Dilke with his usual command of little-known facts had tried to call attention in 1896,[2] was made public in a perilously sudden way by the news that Lord Kitchener had started from Khartoum up the Blue Nile, in consequence of information that a French force was in possession of a place called Fashoda. Temper rose sharply both in Great Britain and in France. On this side of the Channel it was felt that an attempt was being made to wrest from us, now that we had made the

[1] See p. 398. [2] See p. 397.

Soudan a safe region again, some part of the regained territory. On the other side it was felt that the British, greedy for rule, were denying to a band of courageous explorers the just rewards of their skill and endurance. Lord Kitchener had the wisdom not to force action upon the French officer, Captain Marchand, whom he found at Fashoda. He merely established a British post there as well, and returned to Khartoum. The fact that Captain Marchand remained at Fashoda, the fact that the British flag was at Fashoda, were just sufficient to put popular opinion on either side in the right in its own view; and two months later, on 4th November, Lord Salisbury was able to announce that the French had withdrawn from the place. By that time Lord Kitchener was in England, visiting the Queen at Balmoral, receiving a sword of honour from the City of London, and showing to the enthusiastic clamour of the populace an unmoved countenance, which exactly suited the crowd's conception of him as the embodiment of "efficiency for its own sake." The French nation, on its side, had enough to think about. An officer of the army, Colonel Henry, had confessed to forging one of three letters upon which the upholders of the Dreyfus trial largely relied, and had then committed suicide. At the beginning of October the Cour de Cassation obtained the leave of the Government to undertake revision of the trial; and in this upheaval of its confidence the French people found Fashoda but a minor incident.

Towards the end of the year Lord Salisbury fluttered public interest by appointing Mr George Curzon to be Viceroy of India, with the title of Lord Curzon of Kedleston. Mr Curzon's fame rested, so far as England at large was concerned, less on his knowledge of the Far East, where he had travelled in curious countries on the north-west frontier of India and in Persia, than on his reputation as one of the most opinionated and positive young men that Oxford had sent into public life. He had been Under-

Secretary for India just before the dissolution of 1892, and was Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the present Government. He was not yet forty, and even in this year of perpetual excitements his appointment to the Vice-royalty was received with a gasp of astonishment.

Of South Africa little was heard in this year. The officers concerned in the Jameson Raid, with the exception of Sir John Willoughby and Colonel Rhodes, were restored to their places in the British army; and after the battle of Omdurman, where Colonel Rhodes, who was acting as a war correspondent, was wounded, he also was restored to his rank. Mr Cecil Rhodes was re-elected a director of the British South Africa Company. These events had their meaning, but nothing at the moment pressed the meaning home.

END OF VOLUME I

APPENDIX

GOVERNMENTS FROM 1880 TO 1898

THE following are lists of the principal members of the Governments formed during the period covered by this volume:—

1880

MR GLADSTONE'S MINISTRY

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE .	Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Lord Privy Seal
EARL OF ROSEBERY . . .	Lord Privy Seal.
EARL OF SELBORNE . . .	Lord High Chancellor.
LORD CARLINGFORD . . .	Lord President of Council.
HUGH CULLING EARDLEY CHILDERS	Chancellor of the Exchequer.
SIR WILLIAM VERNON HARCOURT .	Secretary of State, Home Department.
EARL GRANVILLE . . .	Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs.
EARL OF DERBY	Secretary of State, Colonial Affairs.
MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON . .	Secretary of State, War.
EARL OF KIMBERLEY . . .	Secretary of State, India.
EARL OF NORTHBROOK . .	First Lord of Admiralty.
EARL SPENCER	Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.
GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE .	Postmaster-General.
JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN . . .	President of Board of Trade.
SIR CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE, BART.	President, Local Government Board.
GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN . .	Chancellor, Duchy of Lancaster.

1885

MARQUESS OF SALISBURY'S MINISTRY

Marquess of Salisbury	Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary.
Lord Halsbury	Lord High Chancellor.
Viscount Cranbrook	Lord President of Council.
Earl of Harrowby	Lord Privy Seal.
Sir Michael E. Hicks-Beach, Bart.	Chancellor of Exchequer.
Sir Richard Assheton Cross	Secretary of State, Home Department.
Sir Frederick Arthur Stanley	Secretary of State, Colonial Affairs.
William Henry Smith	Secretary of State, War.
Lord Randolph H. S. Churchill	Secretary of State, India.
Duke of Richmond and Gordon	Secretary for Scotland.
Lord George Francis Hamilton	First Lord of Admiralty.
Earl of Iddesleigh	First Lord of Treasury.
Earl of Carnarvon	Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.
Lord Ashbourne	Lord Chancellor of Ireland.
Hon. Edward Stanhope	President of Board of Trade.
Henry Chaplin (not in Cabinet)	Chancellor, Duchy of Lancaster.

1886

MR GLADSTONE'S MINISTRY

William Ewart Gladstone	Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Lord Privy Seal.
Lord Herschell	Lord High Chancellor.
Earl Spencer	Lord President of Council.
Sir William Vernon Harcourt	Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Hugh Culling Eardley Childers	Secretary of State, Home Department.
Earl of Rosebery	Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs.
Earl Granville	Secretary of State, Colonial Affairs.
Henry Campbell-Bannerman	Secretary of State, War.
Earl of Kimberley	Secretary of State, India.
George Otto Trevelyan Earl of Dalhousie (not in Cabinet)	Secretary for Scotland
Marquess of Ripon	First Lord of Admiralty.
John Morley	Chief Secretary for Ireland.
Anthony James Mundella	President of Board of Trade.
Joseph Chamberlain James Stansfeld (not in Cabinet)	President, Local Government Board.

1886

MARQUESS OF SALISBURY'S MINISTRY

Marquess of Salisbury	Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Lord Privy Seal.
Lord Halsbury	Lord High Chancellor.
Viscount Cranbrook	Lord President of Council.
Lord Randolph H. S. Churchill	Chancellor of Exchequer.
Henry Matthews, Q.C.	Secretary of State, Home Department.
Earl of Iddesleigh	Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs.
Hon. Edward Stanhope	Secretary of State, Colonial Affairs.
William Henry Smith	Secretary of State, War.
Viscount Cross	Secretary of State, India.
Arthur James Balfour	Secretary for Scotland.
Lord George Francis Hamilton	First Lord of Admiralty.
Lord Ashbourne	Lord Chancellor of Ireland.
Sir Michael E. Hicks-Beach, Bart.	Chief Secretary for Ireland;
Lord Stanley of Preston	President of Board of Trade.
Lord John J. R. Manners	Chancellor, Duchy of Lancaster.

1892

MR GLADSTONE'S MINISTRY

William Ewart Gladstone	Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Lord Privy Seal.
Lord Herschell	Lord High Chancellor.
Earl Kimberley	Lord President of Council. / Secretary of State, India.
Sir William Vernon Harcourt	Chancellor of Exchequer.
Herbert Henry Asquith, Q.C.	Secretary of State, Home Department.
Earl of Rosebery	Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs.
Marquess of Ripon	Secretary of State, Colonial Affairs.
Henry Campbell-Bannerman	Secretary of State, War.
Sir George Otto Trevelyan	Secretary for Scotland.
Earl Spencer	First Lord of the Admiralty.
John Morley	Chief Secretary for Ireland.
Arnold Morley	Postmaster-General.
Anthony John Mundella	President of Board of Trade.
Henry Hartley Fowler	President, Local Government Board.
James Bryce	Chancellor, Duchy of Lancaster.
George John Shaw-Lefevre	First Commissioner of Works.
Arthur Herbert Dyke Acland.	Vice-President, Committee of Council.

1895

MARQUESS OF SALISBURY'S MINISTRY

Marquess of Salisbury . .	Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary.
Lord Halsbury . . .	Lord High Chancellor.
Duke of Devonshire . .	Lord President of Counell
Viscount Cross	Lord Privy Seal.
Sir Michael E. Hicks-Beach, Bt.	Chancellor of Exchequer.
Sir Matthew White Ridley, Bt.	Secretary of State, Home Department.
Joseph Chamberlain . . .	Secretary of State, Colonial Affairs.
Marquess of Lansdowne . .	Secretary of State, War.
Lord George Francis Hamilton	Secretary of State, India.
Lord Balfour of Burleigh .	Secretary for Scotland.
George Joachim Goschen . .	First Lord of Admiralty.
Arthur James Balfour . .	First Lord of Treasury.
Earl Cadogan	Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.
Lord Ashbourne . . .	Lord Chancellor of Ireland.
Charles Thomson Ritchie .	President of Board of Trade.
Lord James, Q.C. . . .	Chancellor, Duchy of Lancaster.
Henry Chaplin	President, Local Government Board.
Walter Hume Long . . .	President, Board of Agriculture.
Aretas Akers-Douglas . .	President, Board of Works and Public Buildings.

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